REPORT OF DOCTORAL RESEARCH

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SHI'AH DYNASTIES: FATIMID IN NORTH AFRICA AND SAFAVID IN PERSIA

The Support to Quality Improvement of Islamic Higher Education Project (*4-in-1 Project*) (IND-0164)

BY

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INSTITUT AGAMA ISLAM NEGERI WALISONGO
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PREFACE

All praise belongs to Allah, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful. Blessing and peace be upon His last Prophet Muhammad PBUH, his family members and all those who follow his guidance till the end of this world.

In the course of History of Islamic Civilization, there are topics that talk about dynasties founded by followers of Shi'ah, particularly the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa and Safavid dynasty in Persia. Discourse on Shi'ah is much discussed especially after the revolution of Iran in 1979, known as the Islamic Revolution, in which Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's rule. However, references to the discourse on Shi'ah and dynasties built by its followers are still very limited. For this reason, the author is interested in writing about dynasties founded by them by making comparisons between the two dynasties.

Reference materials used in this writing process are dominantly in English, and the author found them while he was in Australia. Therefore, the author would like to thank those who gave him opportunity to do research in Australia, particularly the Rector of IAIN Walisongo, Chairman of the PIU and the staffs. The acknowledgment would not be complete without thanking the Head and the staffs of the Library of the University of Queensland who facilitated the author in utilizing the references.

The author admits that this report is far from perfection, therefore he expects criticism and constructive feedback for improvement of it. May Allah give His guidance to us.

Semarang, December 01, 2013

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

The rise and development of Islam has been the subject of numerous studies, both general and specialized, but study on the origins of Shi'ah and dynasties founded by Shi'ah is insufficient attention. The divison of community of Islam into Sunni and Shi'ah branches has commonly explained in terms of purely political differences. Their origins have been attributed to basically political partisanship with regard to the leadership of the *ummah,* a partisanship which later exploded into conflict in the civil war between Ali and Mu'awiyah.

Shi'ah is a sect in Islam that believes that 'Ali bin Abu Talib is the legitimate successor to Muhammad and rejects the first three caliphs. The most popular opinion is that the Shi'ah was born after a failure in negotiations between the force of Caliph 'Ali bin Abu Talib with the rebel of Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan in Siffin in 657, which is commonly named as *tahkim* or arbitration. As a result of this failure, some troops of 'Ali rebelled against the leadership of Ali and left the Ali's troops; they were called the *Khawarij*. Most of those who remained loyal to the caliph were called *Syî'atu 'Ali* (followers of' Ali) or what is now called Shi'ah. The Shi'ah believes that descendants of Ali became known as imams and were seen not only as political leaders, but spiritual and religious leaders as well. However, there is another opinion that actually the Shi'ah had appeared after death of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The friends and followers of 'Ali

believed that the caliphate and religious authority (*marja'iyat al-'ilm*) belonged to Ali. This belief came from their consideration of 'Ali position and station in relation to the Prophet, his relation to the chosen among the companions, as well as to muslim in general. (Tabataba'i, 1975: 41).

Within the Shi'ah, the various sects came into being because they differed over their imams' successions. Each succession dispute brought forth a different tariqah (literal meaning 'path'; extended meaning 'sect') within Shi'ah. Each Shi'ah *tariqah* followed its own particular imam's dynasty thus resulting in different numbers of imams for each particular Shi'ah *tariqah*. Disagreements among the Shi'ah sects arose mostly concerning the line of succession of the imamate as well as, for many, the nature of the Hidden Imam, i.e., whether or to what extent he was present in this world rather than in a completely removed sphere. Views also differed regarding the possibility or need for political action.

According to the Shi'ah, mankind is in permanent need of a divinely appointed authoritative guide whose primary role is to lead believers to salvation. They assert that before his demise, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH designated 'Ali bin Abu Talib as his successor to the temporal abd spiritual leadership of the *ummah*. All subsequent imams are descended from 'Ali and Fatimah, the Prohet's daughter. The imam is not elected by consensus of society but appointed by the *nass* (designation) of his predessor and endowed with *'ilm* (authoritative knowledge). This *'ilm* not only invests the imam with the wisdom requisite for the effective ordering of society but, above all, with the knowledge of the spiritual realities which enables him to

guide his followers to an understanding of the inner meaning of the Islamic messages. Since the imam continues to guide the believers in every age, recognition of the imam of the time and submission to his authority becomes paramount in Shi'ah. The articulation of the central pillar of imamah took a variety of forms in Shi'ah. There were varied interpretations of who was the legitimate imam, leading to a number of Shi'i viewpoints, which coalesced into three major groupings: Zaidis (Zaidiyyah) or Fivers, Isma'ilis (Isma'iliyyah) or Seveners and Ithna 'Asharis (Ithna 'Ashariyyah) or Twelvers or Imamis (Imamiyyah). (Al-Maqrizi, 2009: 3-4).

The Zaidis is named after Zaid bin Ali, a half-brother of a grandson of Husain, who rebelled in 737 against the Umayyad caliph Hisham and a group paid allegiance to him. A battle ensued in Kufah between Zaid and the army of the caliph in which Zaid was killed. The followers of Zaid regard him as the fifth imam of the House-hold of the Prophet. (Tabataba'i, 1975: 76-77). The only dynastic rule established by Zaidis is that of the Qasimi Imams in Yemen (1598-1851). The Seveners or Isma'ilis appeared due to dispute with the seventh imam. According to the Twelvers or Ithna 'Asharis, the seventh imam is son of Ja'far named Musa al-Kazim, while according to Severners, the seventh imam is son of Ja'far named Isma'il. So, although Isma'il had died, they did not want to admit coronation of Musa al-Kazim as imam. According to them, the right of Isma'il as a imam could not be transferred to others, despite being dead. The important dynasty established by Isma'ilis is Fatimid in North Africa (909-1171). The other sect in Shi'ah is *Ithna 'Asharis* or Twelvers. This sect is named Twelvers because its belief in twelve divinely

ordained leaders, known as the Twelve Imams, and its belief that the Mahdi will be the returned. He is the Twelfth Imam who disappeared and is believed by Twelvers to be in occultation. Twelvers share many tenets of Shi'ah with related sects, such as the belief in imam, but the 'Ismaili and Zaydi sects each believe in a different number of imam and, for the most part, a different path of succession regarding the imamate. They also differ in the role and overall definition of an imam. The most important dynasty established by the Twelvers is Safavid in Persia (1501-1736).

Of the three dynasties built by Shi'ah as mentioned above, the two dynasties: the Fatimid built by Isma'ilis and Safavid built by Twelvers are important studies in the context of the history of Islamic civilization. For this reason, it needs to reveal the origin of the two dynasties, dynasties' rulers, dynasties' efforts in developing civilization, and factors causing their decline and collapse. Furthermore, it is important to compare in some aspects of the two dynasties.

B. Statement of the Problem

Regarding the above background, the main problem becoming the focus of this research is comparison between Fatimid dynasty in North Africa and Safavid in Persia about: their origin, their rulers and their efforts to develop civilization, and factors which caused their decline and fall.

C. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Before comparing the dynasty of Fatimid in North Africa and the dynasty of Safavid in Persia on: their origin, results in developing civilization, and factors causing decline and collapse, the study

begins with explanation of matters related to the Shi'ah in general, namely: its origin, concept of the imamate, and sects within the Shi'ah. It is important to describe the concept of imamate because appearing sects in Shi'ah is greatly influenced by this concept. After that, the research will focus on comparing two dynasties on: their origin, their rulers and their efforts to develop civilization, and factors which caused their decline and fall.

D. Significance of the Research

There are some books explaining the existence of the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa and the Safavid dynasty in Persia; but until now, there is not a book or article explaining the comparison between these dynasties. Therefore, it is important to compare these dynasties.

Besides that, personally, researcher is a lecturer who has been teaching the course of History of Islamic Civilization for more than twenty two years. Among topics discussed in the course are: history of Fatimid dynasty in North Africa and Safavid in Persia.

E. Method of the Research

The research will be carried out by using a qualitative approach, means that the data collected is not the form of numbers. Collecting data is done through relevant documents supported by interview with related persons.

Meanwhile, technique of data analysis is a comparison; in this case, the researcher will compare some aspects of two dynasties. The comparison focuses on: their origin, their rulers and their efforts to develop civilization, and factors which caused their decline and fall.

F. Composition of the Research's Report

The report consists of six chapters. Chapter I is introduction

containing: background of the problem, statement of the problem, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the research, method of the research and composition of the research's report. Chapter II is overview of Shi'ah comprising three issues: the origin of Shi'ah, concept of the imamate and sects within the Shi'ah. Chapter III explains Fatimid dynasty in North Africa, containing: the origin of the Fatimid dynasty, Fatimid's rulers and their efforts to develop civilization, and decline and fall of the Fatimid dynasty. Chapter IV discusses on Safavid dynasty in Persia, comprising: the origin of the Safavid dynasty, Safavid's rulers and their efforts to develop civilization, and the decline and fall of the Safavid dynasty. Chapter V which the core discussion of the research is comparison of some aspects between Fatimid and Safavid dynasties on: their origin, their rulers and their efforts to develop civilization, and factors which caused their decline and fall. This report is ended by Conclusion.

CHAPTER II
OVERVIEW OF SHI'AH

A. Origin of Shi'ah and Its Doctrines

The word shi'ah means: follower; member of a party. As such, the term Shi'ah alone has no negative or positive meaning unless we specify the leader of the party. If one is a shi'ah (follower) of the most righteous servants, then there is nothing wrong with being shi'ah. However, if one becomes the Shi'ah of a tyrant or a wrong-doer, he will meet with the fate of his leader. The word shia is mentioned in Al-Qur'an, such as:

وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ

"And most surely Ibrahim was among the Shi'ah (follower) of him (i.e., Nuh)" (as-Saffat: 83)

In another verse, Al-Qura'an talks about the shi'ah of Musa versus the enemies of Musa:

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَىٰ حِينِ غَفْلَةٍ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ هَٰذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَهَٰذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ ۖ فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَزَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَقَضَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ۖ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۖ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُضِلٌّ مُبِينٌ

“And he (Musa) entered the city at a time when its people dwelt in distraction. He found there two men fighting, this one from among his followers, and that one from his enemies. The one who was from his followers sought his help against him who was from his enemies. So Musa hit him with his fist, whereupon he expired. He said, 'This is of satan's doing. Indeed he is an enemy, manifestly misguiding.” (al-Qasas: 15)

The above verses that the writer mentioned in support of shi'ah, has used this term singular form (i.e., one group of followers). This means that it has special meaning, such as: the shi'ah of Nuh PBUH, the shi'ah of Musa PBUH.

As the writer mentioned above, the term shi'ah means follower, and now refers to the group of muslims who, after the death of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, believed that the function of leadership in the Islamic community was prerogative of 'Ali and his successors, regarded as *ma'sum*. In the history of Islam, shi'ah has been specially used for the followers of Ali. (Sobhani, 2001: 97).

It is hard to tell exactly when shi'ah began or when it can positively be distinguished as a separate sect. In any attempt to determine the origins of shi'ah, one must try to examine in detail the earliest incident in which such feelings manifest themselves. One has to go right back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, perhaps, to find the events that eventually gave rise to this movement which ultimately established itself as a distinct branch of Islam.

Historically, the event of the Thaqifah is inextricably connected with the emergence of Shi'ah. The Thaqifah, after which the event is named, was old assembly hall in Madinah where the people used to discuss and resolve their crucial problem. It was there that, as soon as the news of the Prophet's death came out, the people of Madinah gathered together to choose their leader. It was there that a group of Muhajirun forced on the Ansar their wish for the acceptance of Abu Bakr as the sole leader of the community. The task of consolidation of Abu Bakr's authority as the successor to the Prophet, however, was still far from complete after the Thaqifah meeting.

'Ali bin Abu Talib, who was one of the first to believe in his message and was a great champion of Muhammad's cause during his lifetime, he became a recluse after the Prophet's death when Abu Bakr was nominated as Muhammad's successor by Umar and was duly accepted by the community of muslims at Madinah. 'Ali was the most important candidate from the Prophet's family, as is unanimously attested by Sunni and Shi'ah sorces alike, along with his close associates and the family of Hashim, was not even aware of the decision taken in the Thaqifah.

The followers of 'Ali beleved that the caliphate and religious authority (*marja'iyat al-'ilm*) belonged to Ali. This belief came from their consideration of 'Ali position and station in relation to the Prophet, his relation to the chosen among the companions, as well as his to muslim in general. It was only the events that occurred during the few days of the Prophet's illness that indicated that their was opposition to their view. Contrary to their expectation, at the very moment when the Prophet died and his body lay still unburied, while his household and a few companions were occupied with providing for his burial and funeral service, the friends and followers of 'Ali received news of the activity of another group who had gone to the mosque where the community was gathered faced with this sudden lost of its leader. This group, which was later to form the majority, set forth in great haste to select a caliph for the muslims with the aim of ensuring the welfare of the community and solving its immediate problems. They did this without consulting the household of the Prophet, his relatives or many of his friends, who were busy with the funeral, and without providing them with the least information. Thus

'Ali and his companions were presented with a *fait accompli.* (Tabataba'i, 1975: 41).

The traditions vary and are often contradictory as to when 'Ali was reconciled with Abu Bakr. According to the most commonly reported traditions, which must be accepted as authentic because of overwhelming historical evidence and other circumstantial reasons, 'Ali held himself apart until the death of Fatimah, six months later. (Jafri, 2000: 51).

When Uthman was assassinated, Ali was finally appointed caliph, but his predecessor ('Uthman) had already placed many of his clan, the Ummayads, in leading positions in the growing Muslim empire and at least one of them, Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria at Damascus and son of Muhammad's long-standing enemy Abu Sufyan, considered himself powerful enough to challenge Ali for the control of the whole Muslim world. Ali found himself faced early in his caliphate with an insurrection led by a number of Muhammad's companions including his wife 'Aisah which was ostensibly started to avenge the blood of Uthman. Ali had failed to bring the former caliph's murderers to justice and both 'Aishah and Mu'awiyah used this as a cause against him and sought to displace him. 'Aisah joined a force against him led by Muhammad's companions Talhah and Zubayr which was defeated by the caliph at the "Battle of the Camel (*al-Jamal*)". The conflict at the battle of Al-Jamal brought about a serious split in the muslim community. (Jafri, 2000: 95).

Another battle faced by Ali is the battle of Siffin in 657. This battle was occurred because 'Muawiyah, governor of Syria, refused to recognize Ali as the new caliph before justice for the murder of his

kinsman, the third caliph, Utsman, was done; for his part, Ali relied on the support of individuals who had been implicated in Uthman's murder and was therefore reluctant to prosecute them. Ali gathered support in Kufah, where he had established his centre, and invaded Syria. The two armies met along the Euphrates River at Siffin (near the Syrian-Iraqi border), where they engaged in an indecisive succession of skirmishes, truces, and battles, culminating in the legendary appearance of Mu'awiyah's troops with copies of Al-'Quran impaled on their lances, supposedly a sign to let God's word decide the conflict. Ali agreed to bring the matter to arbitration on the basis of Al-Qur'an and delegated Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as his representative, while Mu'awiyah sent 'Amr bin al-ʿAṣ. By agreeing to arbitration, Ali conceded to deal with Mu'awiyah on equal terms, thus permitting him to challenge Ali's claim as leader of the Muslim community. This concession aroused the anger of a large group of Ali's followers, who protested that إِنِ ٱلۡحُكۡمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ "judgment belongs to God alone" (al-An'am: 57) and believed that arbitration would be a repudiation of Qurʾānic dictum:

فَإِنۢ بَغَتۡ إِحۡدَىٰهُمَا عَلَى ٱلۡأُخۡرَىٰ فَقَٰتِلُواْ ٱلَّتِي تَبۡغِي

"If one party rebels against the other, fight against that which rebels" (al-Hujurat: 9). A small number of these pietists withdrew (*kharaju*) to the village of Harura' and so became known as *Khawarij*.

Accounts of what precisely transpired at the arbitration vary; what is clear, however, is that Ali's position was critically weakened as a result. In 658 Mu'awiyah was proclaimed caliph by some of his Syrian supporters. 'Ali and Mu'awiyah retained their own partisans,

but, as Mu'awiyah's authority began to expand into Iraq and the Hejaz (western Saudi Arabia), Ali's diminished to Kufah, his capital.

Naturally, in the war of Siffin, Mu'awiyah was the agrgressor rather than defender, for the protest to revenge someone's blood can never occur in the form of defense. The pretext of this war was blood revenge. During the last days of his life, 'Uthman, in order to quell the uprising against him, asked Mu'awiyah for help, but the army of Mu'awiyah which set out from Damascus to Madinah purposely waited on the road until 'Uthman was killed. Then he returned to Damascus to begin an uprising to revenge 'Utman's death. After the death of 'Ali and his gaining the caliphate himself, Mu'awiyah forgot the question of revenging the blood of 'Uthman and did not pursue the matter further. (Tabataba'i, 1975: 53).

Those who supported `Ali at the battle of Al-Jamal and later at Siffin were at first called the "people of Iraq" (*ahl al-`Iraq*) as well as the "party of Ali" (*Shi'at `Ali* or *al-`Alawiyah*). Their opponents were called *Shi'aht `Uthman* or more commonly *al-`Uthmaniyyah*. They included the faction of 'Aishah, Talhah and Zubair (called the "people of the camel" or *ashab al-jamal*) and the Syrians (*ahl ash-Sham*), who were also known as the *Shi'at Mu'awiyah.* (Jafri, 2000: 95-96).

After discussing the origins of Shi'ah, it is important to explain the doctrine of Shi'ah. The main sources for all ritual and legal practices in Islam are Al-Qur'an and hadith. However, in the matter of basic theological principles, Shi'ah hold that reason is the primary source.

Al-Qur'an is the principal source of every form of Islamic thought. It is Al-Qur'an which gives religious validity and authority to

every other religious source in Islam. It is considered to be the word of God revealed through Muhammad PBUH acting as God's mouthpiece. The text of Al-Qur'an in the recension compiled under the direction of 'Uthman is accepted by both Sunni and Shi'ah. However, there is considerable evidence that the early Shi'ah did not accept the standard text of Al-Qur'an. Even as late as the time of Shaikh al-Mufid, there was considerable discussion among the Shi'ah as to what had been omitted from Al-Qur'an by the enemies of 'Ali, although by that time there was consensus that nothing had been added. In other word, it was felt that although the standard text of Al-Qur'an represented God's word with no human additions, part of the text extolling 'Ali and pointing to his imamate had been excised by his enemies. (Momen, 1985: 172).

The hadith of the Prophet, and his sunnah generally, are considered, together with Al-Qur'an, as primary sources of the system of muslim belief and jurisprudence. According the view point of shi'ah, that after the passing away of the Prophet, a group of muslims, under the pressure of the powers of the government of the time, neglected to write down the prophetic hadith; but fortunately, the followers of the Imams of the *ahl al-bait* vigilantly took up the task of recording these hadiths. Throughout history, those trained in the school of thought of the *ahl al-bai*t have compiled voluminous collections of hadith, which are mentioned in the category of works known as *kutub rijal*. Large collections of hadith were compiled, especially in the 10th and 11th centuries, on the basis of books written in the time of the Imams, by their students; to this day, these collections remain pivotal as regards the religious beliefs and rulings of the

Shi'ah. These are some of titles and authors of these books:

Al-Usl min al-Kafi (8 volumes) by Muhammad bin Ya'qub al-Kulaini (d. 940).

1. *Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih* (2 volumes) by Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Babawaih, know Shaik Saduq (d. 981).
2. *Tahdhib al-Usul (2 volumes) by Muhammad bin Hasan at-Tusi, known Shaykh at-Tusi (d. 995).*
3. *Al-Istibsar* (4 volumes) by Shaikh at-Tusi also.

The Shi'ah do not act according to just any hadith. In the field of belief, the narrations of ordinary individuals, or those that are contrary to Al-Qur'an and the sunnah, will definitely not be accepted as proof-texts. Likewise, the existence of narrations in the hadith books is not necessarily as reason for trusting the author of these books; rather, the hadith recounted in such books are divided by the scholars of Shi'ah cited above into four categories: *sahih* (sound), *hasan* (good), *muwaththaq* (reliable) and *da'if* (weak), each category having its own particular rules and criteria. (Sobhani, 2001: 180-181).

The Shi'ah believed that the Prophet and the Imams were sinless and infallible, so their words and deeds are a guide and model for all to follow. These were eventually written down after being transmitted orally for several generations. Thus, each hadith consists of the names of the chain of transmitters (*isnad*) followed by the text (*matan*) of the tradition being transmitted. The hadith constitute the *sunnah* (practice) of the Prophet and Imams; they are also frequently called *khabar* (information) by Shi'is. The Shi'i hadith usually rely on the words or actions of one of the Imams and even those that go back to

the Prophet are usually through one of the Imams. (Momen, 1985: 173-174).

For the fundamental elements of the religion, both Sunni and Shi'ah agree on three of them, namely: *tauhid* (the oneness of God), nubuwwah (prophethood) and *ma'ad* (the resurrection). However, to this the Shi'ah add two further fundamentals: *imamah* (leadership), and ʿadl (divine justice). In ritual practice (*'ibadah*), Shi'ah divided into eight elements: obligatory prayer (salat or namaz), fasting (*siyam/sawm*), alms (*zakat*), the one-fifth tax (*khumus*), pilgrimage (*hajj*), religious war (*jihad*), enjoining to do good (*amr bi al-ma'ruf*), and exhortation to desist from evil (*nahy 'an al-munkar*). (Momen, 1985: 178-180).

In the field of doctrines, Shi'ah have placed doctrines specific to themselves in parallel with those accepted by Sunnism. The field of jurisprudence may be divided into ritual observances (*'ibadat*) and social transaction (*mu'amalat*). As far as *'ibadat* are concerned, Shi'ism does not differ much from the four schools of Sunnism (Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali); whereas, with respect to *mu'amalat* (such as marriage, inheritance) there are more marked divergences. (Momen, 1985: 181)

The following are some *'ibadat, mu'amalat* and other issues executed by Shi'is that differ from Sunnis:

1. *Salat* (Prayer). The Friday prayer has never held the same importance among Shi'is as it has among Sunnis. With occultation of the Imam who is the true leader of the Friday prayer, the significance of this '*ibadah* is diminished. It is incumbent upon

every muslim to pray five times a day, at times prescribed by Al-Quran and the Sunnah: from noon to sunset is the period for the Zuhr and 'Asar prayers; from sunsut to the late night is the period for the Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers; and from light to rise to sunrise is the time for the Fajr prayer. The Shi'ah believe that in the period between noon and sunset, both the Zuhr and 'Asar prayers can be prayed together, the first four units of prayer pertaining to Zuhr and the second set of for 'Asar. Therefore, one is allowed to pray these two sets of prayer any time within the prescribed period, without necessarily having to each prayer separately, at the preferred time: however it is better to separate the two and pray each at the preferred time. In principle, the permissibility of joining the two prayers together is agreed upon, in certain circumstances, by all schools of fiqh. In addition to the obligatory prayers, Shi'is have a large number of prayers, revealed by the Imams, which are for use either on special occasions or are purely devotional in nature, which is known as *du'a* or *munajat*. (Sobhani, 2001: 189-190; Momen, 1985: 181).

2. *Ziyarat* (Visiting Shi'i Shrines). The custom of visiting the shrines of the Imams was built uo as an alternative parallel activity given an importance which in the eyes of the ordinary believer often appeared to exceed that of the pilgrimage to Mekkah. Visiting the shrines of 'Ali at Najaf, Husain at Karbala, the seventh and ninth Imams at Kazimain, of Imam Rida at Mashhad and of Fatimah Ma'sumah (the sister of the Imam ar-Rida) at Qumm became an important activity in Shi'i religious life, and one in which

comparatively humble persons could participate. Visiting the shrines of minor Shi'i saints and the descendents of the Imams also became an important activity with each shrine having its own prayer of visitation. In addition, the visiting of the graves of the great personages is a kind of propagation both of the faith and the holy cities. (Momen 1985: 181-182; Sobhani, 2001: 174).

3. *Nikah Mut'ah* (Temporary Marriage). Marriage for a fixed term for a pre-determined financial arrangement is considered allowable by Shi'is. The marriage may be for any length of time, even for a matter of hours. There is also a period of time after the marriage during which the woman is not supposed to marry again, although there are ways of getting around this latter law. In Persian, this practice is called *sigha* and it is also sometimes called *nikah al-muwaqqat*. It should be noted that in the systems of *fiqh* of other schools of Islam a type of permanent marriage is allowed which, in reality, is but a form of temporary marriage: this is a marriage in which a man and woman marry, but either one or both of them knows that after a certain time they must divorced and separate from each other. The permissibility of such a marriage is equivalent to the permissibility of temporary marriage; only the names differ. (Momen 1985: 182-183; Sobhani, 2001: 192).

4. *Taqiyyah* (Religious Dissimulation). Religious dissimulation while maintaining mental reservation is considered lawful in Shi'ism in situations where there is overwhelming danger of loss of life or property and where no danger to religion would occur thereby. It is not only religious grounds that dissimulation is

justified, but intelligence and human wisdom likewise reveal necessity and propriety of the practice in certain sensitive situations. The preservation of life, property and honour are necessary, and on the other, acting according to one's beliefs is a part of one's religious duty. (Momen 1985: 183; Sobhani, 2001: 150).

5. *Talaq* (Divorce). In general, it is made more difficult under Shi'i law than under Sunni. Only the stricter divorce according to the Sunna (*talaq as-sunnah*) and not the easier innovated divorced (*talaq al-bida'*) is allowed. Both Shi'is and Sunnis agree that if a man divorces his wife three times, he cannot marry her again unless she is first married to another. (Momen 1985: 183).

6. *Inheritance*. Under Sunni law, where there are males and females equally close in kinship to the deceased, then the inheritance passes to male in preference to the female. In Shi'i law, however, the presence of male heirs does not exclude the female, although the share of the male is, in accordance with a Qur'anic rule, double that of the female. (Momen, 1985: 183).

7. *Bada'* (change destiny). The divine decree as regards human destiny is of two types: a definitive and unconditional destiny, which is not susceptible of any kind of alteration; and an open-ended and conditional destiny, which is, in the absence of certain conditions, can be altered, such as that another destiny will replace it. The reality of *bada'* is founded upon two principles. The first is that God has absolute power and authority over the whole of existence, and whenever He wills, He can replace a given destiny

with another one; both types of destiny mentioned are concerned within His foreknowledge, and there can be no kind of alteration in respect of His knowledge. Therefore the first type of destiny does not in any way imply limitation of God's power, such as would strip Him of the ability to change this destiny. The second principle is that acts of supreme power and authority issue from God; and when He brings about the replacement of one destiny for another, it is not without wisdom and rectitude. Some of these changes of destiny are brought about by man himself, who can –through his free will, his decision and his way of life-- lay the groundwork for a change in his destiny. (Sobhani, 2001: 159-161).

8. *Khums* (the Tax of One-Fifth). All the *fuqaha'* of Islam are of the belief that spoils obtained in war should be divided amongst the warriors, but a fifth of all spoils is to be given for certain other purpose, as the following verse states:

وَٱعْلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُم مِّن شَىْءٍ فَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُۥ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ وَٱبْنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءَامَنتُم بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ ٱلْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ ٱلْتَقَى ٱلْجَمْعَانِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"And know that whatever ye take as spoils of war, then verily, a fifth thereof is for Allah, and for the Messenger and for the kinsman (who hath need) and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if ye believe in Allah and that which We revealed unto Our slave on the Day of Discrimination, the day when the two armies met. And Allah is Able to do all things." (Al-Anfal: 41).

The *fuqaha'* of Shi'ah differ from those of other schools in that the latter regard this fifth (*khums*) as being confined to spoils of war, and do not believe in giving over this share in any circumstances, arguing that this serve relates only to spoils of war. However, this opinion us incorrect, from two points of view. Firstly, in the Arabic language, anything that one obtains without having worked for it, is referred as *ghanimah*, and the word is not restricted in its application only to the *ghanimah* obtained in war. In principle, *ghanimah* should be seen in contrast with *gharama* (indemnity). When someone is forced to pay an indemnity or reparation in the form of a sum of money, this will be called a *gharama*; if one receives the profit thereof, it will be called a *ghanimah*. Secondly, certain narrations make it clear that the Prophet made the fifth (*khums*) tax obligatory in respect of all types of profit. (Sobhani, 2001: 195-196).

These are some branches of doctrines, beliefs and deeds in relation to which the Shi'ah have a particular perspective and mode of application. Of course, the points over which the Shi'ah differ with other schools are not limited to those which the writer mentioned.

B. Concept of Imamah

For Sunni, the word *imam* denotes a person who stands or walks in front. It is commonly used to mean a person who leads the course of prayer in the mosque. It also means the head of a madhhab or "school of thought". Al-Qur'an indicates the meaning of *imam* by this, for example:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ

"*One day We will summon every group of people with their imam". (al-Isra': 71).*

Al-Qur'an explains that on the day of Judgment people will come in groups, and each group has its leader in front of it. In the day of judgment, the destiny of the followers of each group highly depends on the destiny of his *imam* (provided that they really followed that *imam*). Allah mentioned in Al-Qur'an that there are two types of *imam*s; some *imam*s are those who invite people to hell fire, they are tyrannical leaders of each era (like Pharaoh, etc.):

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ ۖ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا يُنْصَرُونَ وَأَتْبَعْنَاهُمْ فِي هَٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً ۖ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ هُمْ مِنَ الْمَقْبُوحِينَ.

"We made them leaders who invite to the fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they will not receive any help. We made a curse pursue them in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be among the disfigured." (al-Qasas: 41-42).

Certainly, being the members of the parties of such satanic *imam*s has been severely denounced in Al-Qur'an, and the followers of such parties will meet the fate of their leaders.

However, Al-Qur'an also reminds that there are *imam*s who are appointed by Allah as guides for the mankind:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا ۖ وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

"And amongst them We appointed *imam*s to guide (the people) by Our command, when they had been patient and had conviction in Our signs." (as-Sajdah: 24)

Certainly, the true followers (*Shi'ah*) of these *imam*s will be the real prosperous on the day of resurrection. Thus being a Shi'ah does not mean anything, unless we know the Shi'ah of whom.

The concept of *imamah* is a fundamental difference between Sunni and Shi'ah. From the Shi'i point of view this above meaning is merely the *basic* understanding of the word in the Arabic language and for its proper religious usage the word *imam* is applicable only to those members of the House of the Prophet designated as the infallible by the preceding *imam*. Therefore, imamah is a doctrine of religious, spiritual and political leadership of the ummah. The Shi'ah believes that the *a'immah* (plural of *imam*) are the true caliphs or rightful successors of Muḥammad, and further that *imam*s are possessed of divine knowledge and authority (*'iṣmah*) as well as being part of the ahl al-bayt, the family of Prophet Muhammad (Nasr, 2006: 38).

In the Sunni concept, leadership of the muslim community after death of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, the caliphate, is essentially a temporal leadership. The caliph is a first among equals, elected ideally by consensus, although later the hereditary principles became the norm. However, in the Shi'ah, the succession to the Prophet is a matter of the designation by the Prophet of an individual, namely 'Ali bin Abu Talib as *imam*. Each *imam* designates his successor during his life time. The authority of the *imam* derives from his designation by his predecessor to a spiritual station and is independent of his temporal standing.

The Sunnis and Shi'is are basically in agreement with each other over the nature and function of prophethood. The two main functions of the Prophet are to reveal Allah's law to men and to guide men towards Allah. Of these two functions, the Sunnis believe that both ended with the death of Muhammad PBUH. Otherwise, the Shi'is believe that whereas legislation ended, the function of guiding men,

preserving and explaining the divine law continued through the line of *imam*s (Momen, 1985: 147)

Imam or leader is the title given to a person who takes the lead in a community in a particular social movement or political ideology or scientific or religious form of thought. Naturally, because of his relation to the people he leads, he must conform his actions to their capabilities in both important and secondary matters. The imamah and religious leadership may be studied from three different perspectives: from the perspective of Islamic government, of Islamic sciences and injunctions, and of leadership and innovative guidance in the spiritual life. Shi'ism believes that since Islamic society is in dire need of guidance in each of three aspects, the person who occupies the function of giving that guidance and is the leader of the community in these areas of religious concern must be appointed by God and the Prophet. Naturally, the Prophet himself was also appointed by Divine Command. (Tabataba'i, 1975: 173).

The Prophet also displayed great interest in the problem of succession and never failed to appoint a successor when necessary. Whenever he left Madinah, he would appoint a governor in his own place. Even when he migrated from Makkah to Madinah and there was as yet no idea as to what would occur, in order to have his personal affairs managed in Makkah for those few days and to give back to people what had been entrusted to him, he appointed 'Ali as his successor in matters concerning his debt and personal affairs. The Shi'ites claim that for this very reason it is not conceivable that the Prophet should have died without appointing someone as his successor, without having selected a guide and leader to direct the

affairs of muslims and to turn the wheels of Islamic society. In this context, the Shi'ites thought that since the protector of Islam was the Prophet, after his death Islam would be left without a guide and leader and would thus definitely perish. However, in Ghadir Khumm, their wishes were brought to nought and the Prophet presented 'Ali as the guide and leader of Islam to the people. Narrated from Bara' that he said, “I was in the company of the Prophet during the farewell pilgrimage. When we reached Ghadir Khumm, he ordered that place to be cleaned. The he took 'Ali's hand and placet him on the right side. Then he said, 'Am I the authority whom you obey?' They answered, 'We obey your directions.' Then he said, 'For whomever I am his master (*maula*) and the authority whom he obeys, 'Ali will be his master. Oh God, be friendly with the friends of 'Ali and enemy of the enemies of 'Ali'. Then 'Umar bin al-Khattab said to 'Ali, 'May this position be pleasing to you, for now you are my master and master of all the believers.'” (Tabataba'i, 1975: 179-180). For this reason, the Shi'ites assert that 'Ali was the successor after the death of the Prophet.

In the Shi'ah's concept of imamah, there are several attributes considered to be necessary for imam and these conditions are held to be proved by traditions and by logical necessity. Therefore, imams are considered to be *mansus* (designated), *ma'sum* (sinless or infallible) and *afdal an-nas* (the best of the people). Besides that, there are a large number of other qualities attributed to them, including: knowledge (*'ilm*) and spiritual guidance (*walayah*). The knowledge refers to both general and religious knowledge (divided into knowledge concerning the externals of religion such as: Al-Qur'an, *hadith*, principles of

jurisprudence, and esetoric knowledge including the allegorical interpretation of Al-Qur'an and mystical knowledge). Meanwhile, the spiritual guidance (*walayah*) is one of the most difficult Islamic terms to translate; it is derived from the same root as *wali* means master or friend. According to Shi'ah, the imam is seen as the spiritual friend or supporters who guides and initiates mankind into the mystical or inner truth of religion; it is through him that God's grace reaches earth.(Momen, 1985: 153-157).

According to the *Ithna 'Ashariyyah* (Twelvers), the following is a listing of the rightful successors to the Prophet Muḥammad PBUH. Each imam was the son of the previous imam except for 'Husain binAli, who was the brother of 'Hasan bin Ali.

1. Ali bin Abu Talib (624-670), known as Amir al-Mu'minin. His father, Abu Talib, was the uncle and guardian of the Prophet and the person who had brought the Prophet to his house and raised him like his own son. It can be said thar 'Ali's succession to the caliphate was approved of and accepted by the vast majority of muslims in Madinah and also in most of the provinces of all muslim area except Mu'awiyah, the Governor of Syria, who refused to accept 'Ali's caliphate urging vengeance for 'Uthman and implying that 'Ali was giving shelter to the murderers and was therefore guilt of complicity. He is the fourth caliph for Sunni, and the first imam and the rightful successor of the Prophet of all Shi'ah.
2. Hasan bin 'Ali (626-680), known as al-Mujtaba. He was the eldest surviving grandson of Muḥammad through Muḥammad's daughter, Fatimah Zahra. He was born in Madinah and shared in

the life of the Prophet for somewhat over seven years, growing up during that time under his loving care. After the death of the Prophet, he was placed directly under the care of his father, 'Ali bin Abu Talib. Hasan succeeded his father as the caliph in Kufa, and on the basis of peace treaty with Mu'awiyah, he relinquished control of Iraq following a reign of seven months.

3. Husain bin 'Ali (626–680), known as Sayyid ash-Shuhada'. He was imam for a period of ten years, all but the last six monts conciding with the caliphate of Mu'awiyah. He lived under the most difficult outward condition of suppression and persecution. He opposed the validity of Caliph Yazid I. As a result, he and his family were later killed in the Battle of Karbala by Yazid's forces. After this incident, the commemoration of Husayn bin Ali has become a central ritual in Shi'ah identity.
4. Ali bin Husain (658-712), known as Zain al-'Abidin, as-Sajjad and az-Zaki. He was the only son of Husain to survive, for his other three brothers (Ali Akbar, Ja'far and Ali Asghar) who was a suckling baby were martyred during the event of Karbala. It had also been related that he was sent a captive to Damascus. After spending a period in imprisonment, he was sent with honor to Madinah because Yazid wanted to conciliate public opinion. However, for a second time, by the order of the Umayyad caliph ('Abdul Malik), he was chained and sent from Madinah to Damascus and then again returned to Madinah. Upon returning to Madinah, he retired from public life completely and spent his time in worship. He was in contact only with the elite among the Shi'ites, and then the elite disseminated among the the Shi'ah the

religious sciences they learned from the Imam.

5. Muhammad bin 'Ali (677-732), known as al-Baqir. He was politically quiescent and refrained from openly putting forward any claim. Zaid, his half brother, advocated a more politically activate role for the imam and was prepared to accommodate to a certain extent the view point of the majority of muslims by acknowledging the caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar and by accepting their legal practices. During the imamate of Muhammad, as a result of the injustice of the Umayyads, revolts and wars broke out in some corner of the Islamic world almost every day.
6. Ja'far bin Muhammad (702–765), known as as-Sadiq. Apart from 'Ali bin Abu Talib, he achieved as great a renown in the muslim world for piety and learning. During the imamate of Ja'far, greater possibilities and a more favorable climate existed for him to propagate religious teachings. He took advantage of the occasion to propagate the religious sciences until the very end of his imamate, which was contemporary with the end of the Ummayad and beginning of the Abbasid caliphates. Many of those who sat in his circle of students later on to become renowned scholars and jurists, such as: Abu Hanifah (the founder of the Hanafi School of Law) and Malik bin Anas (the founder of the Maliki School of Law).
7. Musa bin Ja'far (744-799), known as al-Kazim. The first year of his imamate were concern with a dispute over the succession to the imamate. It appears that most of the followers of as-Sadiq were expecting the latter's eldest son, Isma'il, to succeed to the

imamate. Unfortunately, Isma'il died during his father's lifetime and Musa's followers claimed that as-Sadiq had then designed Musa, but there was some confusion among the ranks of Shi'ah. He was contemporary with the Abbasid caliphs: Mansur, Hadi, Mahdi and Harun. He lived in very difficult times, in hiding, until finally Harun went on the hajj and in Madinah had Musa arrested while praying in the Mosque of the Prophet. He was chained and imprisoned, then taken from Madinah to Basrah and from Basrah to Baghdad where for years he was transferred from one prison to another.

8. Ali bin Musa (765–817), known as ar-Rida. It was during the imamate of ar-Rida that the Caliph Harun ar-Rashid died and the Empire was split between his two sons Amin and Ma'mun. Until that day, the policy of the Abbasid caliphate towards the Shi'ah had been increasingly harsh and cruel. Every once in a while one of the supporters of 'Ali (*'alawis*) would revolt, causing bloody wars and rebellions which were of great difficulty and consequence for the caliphate. Ma'mun thought of finding a new solution for this difficulties had not been able to solve. It was at this point that Ma'mun suddenly and somewhat unexpectedly summoned 'Ali ar-Rida from Madinah to join him at Marw; and on Rida's arrival he was appointed, somewhat reluctantly it is said, to be Ma'mun's heir-apparent. Some have suggested that it was the work of Ma'mun's powerful vizier, al-Fadl bin Sahl, who had Shi'i proclivities. Whatever may have been the cause of Ma'mun's nomination of ar-Rida, there can be no doubt that it caused a great stir.

9. Muhammad bin 'Ali (810–835), known as at-Taqi and al-Jawad. At the time of the death of his father, he was in Madinah. Ma'mun called to Baghdad which was then the capital of the caliphate and outwardly showed him much kindness. He even gave at-Taqi daughter (Umm al-Fadl) in marriage to at-Taqi. At-Taqi spent some time in Baghdad and then with the consent of Ma'mun set out for Madinah where he remained untul Ma'mun's death. When Ma'mun died and was succeeded by his brother Mu'tasim, the at-Taqi was summoned back to Baghdad.
10. Ali bin Muhammad (827–868), known as al-Hadi and al-Naqi. During the remaining years of the Caliphate of Mu'tasim and the five-year caliphate of Wathiq, al-Hadi and the Shi'is were relatively free and unmolested. However, all this was to change with the caliphate of Mutawakkil; he was opposed to 'Ali, whom he cursed openly. He even ordered a clown to ridicule 'Ali at voluptuous banquet. Under his reign, both Shi'is and Mu'tazilis came under an intense persecution.
11. Hasan bin 'Ali (846–874), known al-'Askari. During the seven years of his imamate, due to untold restrictions placed upon him by the caliphate, he lived in hiding and dissimulation (*taqiyyah*). He did not have any sociao contact with even the common people among the Shi'ite population. Only the elite of the Shi'ah were able to see him, Even so, he spent most of his time in prison. There was extreme repression at that time because the Shi'ite population had reached a considerable level in both numbers and power. The caliphate kept Hasan under its close supervision more than even before. It tried through every possible means and

through secret plans to remove and destroy them.

12. Muhammad bin Hasan (868-Present), known as al-Mahdi, al-Muntazar, al-Hujjah, al-Qa'im and Baqiyyatullah. After the death of his al-'Askari, there was a great deal of confusion among the Shi'ah, with some sayings that al-'Askari had had no son and others asserting that he had. Those who were to go on to become the main body of the *Ithna 'Ashariyyah* (Twelvers) belived that Hasan's son, namely Muhammad, had gone into occultation. The occultation of Muhammad is divided into two parts: the first, the minor occultation (*ghaibat sughra*) which began in 872 and ended in 939), lasting about seventy years; the second, the major occultation which commended in 939 and will continue as long as God wills it. (Tabataba'i, 1975: 190-211; Momen, 1985: 23-45).

C. Sects within the Shi'ah

Each religion possesses a certain number of primary principles which form its essential basis and other principles of secondary importance. When the follwers of a religion differ as to the nature of primary principles and their secondary aspects but preserve a common basis, the result is called division or sects within that religion. Although Shi'ah is a small branch of Islam but there are many divisions. It is difficult to determine how many sects within Shi'ah really existed as historical entities because some these sects did exist but the majority died out within a time. Momen in his book *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (1985: 45-60) explained these divisions very detailed.

During the caliphate of 'Ali bin Abu Talib, appeared Saba'iyyah initiated by Abdullah bin Saba' al-Himyari, a semi-legendary figure known as Ibn as-Sauda. He is said to have been a Jew converted to Islam. He is described as adevoted follower of Ali and during 'Uthman's Caliphate travelled from place to place agitating in Ali's favour. Some Sunni writers considered him as the originator of Shi'ism itself, although on account of his extremism this is considered by Shi'is as mere insult. However, during the caliphate of Ali he was banished by Ali to Mada'in on account of his saying to "Ali: "You are God". According to many accounts, 'Ali even caused some of the followers of Abdullah bin Saba' to be burned. After the assassination of 'Ali bin Abu Talib , he is said to have stated that he Ali not died at all. He was alive in the clouds and would return to fill earth with justice. Groups who were active at a later period but who are considered to have been derived from the Saba'iyyah are: 'Ulyaniyyah or 'Alyaniyyah, Ishaqiyyah or Hamrawiyyah, Muhammadiyyah or Mimiyyah and Ahli Haqq.

After the martyrdom of Husain, appeared the Kaisaniyyah, a movement started by Mukhtar bin Abu 'Ubaid ath-Thaqafi, claiming to represent Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah (the son of 'Ali by a Hanafi woman). Mukhtar is said to have taught that the imamate was transferred to Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah after Husain. The Kaisaniyyah survived the defeat and death of Mukhtar but after the death of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah, the split up into: Karibiyyah, Hashimiyyah, 'Abbasiyyah, Rizamiyyah or Muslimiyyah, al-Kaisaniyyah al-Khullas or Mukhtariyyah and Bayaniyyah.

After the imamate of Zain al-'Abidin, Zaid, the son of him,

asserted a claim to the imamate on the basis that it belonged to any descendent of 'Ali and Fatimahh who is learned, pious and comes forward openly to claim the imamate. Zaid is said to have studies under Wasil bin Ata', the reputed founder of the Mu'tazilah. Therefore, Zaidiyyah came to incorporate Mu'tazili theology and large number of this school joined this movement. Zaid and his half-brother, the fifth imam Muhammad al-Baqir, came to open disagreement over several points of doctrine. Initially, Zaid's activist approach attracted many of the Shi'is, but later as Zaid compromised with the traditionalist many of the Shi'ah turned their backs on him and returned to al-Baqir. This sect is divided into a number of sub-groups, namely: a) Jarudiyyah led by Abu al-Jarud Ziyad bin Ziyad which considered the companions sinful in failing to recognise 'Ali and denied the legitimacy of Abu Bakr dan 'Umar. b) Sulaimaniyyah or Jaririyyah founded by Sulaiman bin Jarir; it held that the imamate should be a matter to be decided by consultation. They felt that the companions, including Abu Bakr dan 'Umar, had been error in failing to follow 'Ali but this did not amount to sin; however, 'Uthman was attacked for the innovations that he introduced. c) Butriyyah or Salihiyyah, named respectively after Kathir an-Nawa al-Abtar and Hasan bin Salih. They agreed with the Jaririyyah on the matter of Abu Bakr and 'Umar and suspended judgement with respect to 'Uthman. The sect of Zaidiyyah has survived until present day.

There are a number of groups arose during the imamates of Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja'far as-Sadiq, namely: a) the Janahiyyah, led by 'Abdullah bin Mu'awiyah who was descendant of Ja'far bin Abu Talib (the brother of 'Ali). Ja'far was known as Dhu al-Janahain (the

possessor of two wings). 'Abdullah is accused of holding a number of extreme opinions such as the incarnation of God in a succession of Prophets and *imam*s passing eventually through Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah and Abu Hashim to 'Abdullah bin Mu'awiyah. b) the Mughiriyyah, founded by Mughirah bin Sa'id al-'Ijli. He believed in anthropomorphism with respect to God. After al-Baqir's death, he claimed the imamate and even prophethood for himself. c) the Mansuriyyah or Kisfiyyah initiated by Abu Mansur who initially claimed to be a follower of al-Baqir but was repudiated by the latter on account of *ghuluww* tendencies. Later he claimed the imamate had passed to him. The name of Kisfiyyah arose because he believed himself to be the piece (*kisf*) of heaven falling down. d) Khattabiyyah, led by Abu al-Khattab Muhammad bin Abu Zainab al-Asadi al-Ajda' who initially claimed to be the representative of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq and to have been taught by him knowledge of the Greatest Name of God, but he was repudiated and anathematised by as-Sadiq; then he claimed the imamate for himself while elevating as-Sadiq to the level of prophethood and divinity. e) the Baqiriyyah that believed the imamate ceased with al-Baqir and that he was in concealment and would return.

After the imamate of Ja'far as-Sadiq, several divisions appeared, namely: a) the Ja'fariyyah or Nawusiyyah iniated by Nawus of Basra, believing that as-Sadiq did not die but is concealed and will return as the Mahdi. b) the Aftahiyyah or Fatahiyyah, maintaining that after Husain, the succession should always be through the eldest surviving son of previous imam. The eldest surviving son of as-Sadiq was 'Abdullah al-Aftah; it is claimed that he disagreed with his father

during his lifetime over matters of doctrine and was inclined to the opinion of the Murji'ates. c) the Shumaitiyyah, followers of Yahya bin Abu Shumait who asserted the imamate of as-Sadiq fourth son namely Muhammad, known ad-Dibaj. This sect believed in the imamate remaining in the family of Muhammad ad-Dibaj and that the Mahdi would come from among them. d) Isma'iliyyah or Sab'iyyah, believing that at first, as-Sadiq had intended his eldest son Isma'il to succeed him, but then Isma'il died and this had disturbing implications for both the question of the nature of the imamate and for the doctrine of designation (*nass*).

After the death of Musa al-Kazim, the main line of Shi'is who evetually went on to become the Twelvers (*Ithna 'Ashariyyah*) turned to 'Ali ar-Rida (the son of Musa) and were called the Qat'iyyah (those who were certain of the death of Musa). However, a number of other groups arose, namely: a) the Musawiyyah that denied or were uncertain of the death of Musa and therefore did not accept the continuation of the imamate beyond Musa, and are called Waqifiyyah. Some of them believed that he had not died but escaped from prison and was now in concealment; others considered that he had died and was raised again to life and is in concealment; others believed he was raised to heaven and will return. All these groups believe in the return of Musa as the Imam Mahdi to fill the earth with justice. b) the Bashiriyyah, the followers of Muhammad bin Bashir of Kufah maintaining that Musa was not imprisoned and did not die. He was in concealment and had appointed Ibn Bashir as his representative and given him his seal. Therefore, all the followers of Musa had now to obey Ibn Bashir for he was the imam and imamate

would remain with him and his successors until the return of Musa as the Mahdi.

After the imamate of 'Ali ar-Rida, there were some sects, namely: a) Ahmadiyyah, that believed that 'Ali's father, Musa, had decreed that after 'Ali the imamate should go to Musa's next son, Ahmad. b) the Mu'allifah, adopting a position of being Waqifiyyah over the death of Musa and awaiting his return. c) the Muhaddithah, stating to have been a group of Murji'ites and others from the main stream of Islam who came to believe in the imamate of Musa and 'Ali, but after 'Ali's death returned to their former belief.

After the imamate of 'Ali al-Hadi, a number of sects appeared, among them: a) the Muhammadiyyah, namely a group of 'Ali's followers maintaining that 'Ali had designed Muhammad as the next imam and that Muhammad had not died (although in fact he had died), and was now concealed and would return as the Mahdi. b) the Pure Ja'fariyyah, maintaining that 'Ali al-Hadi had in fact nominated his son, Ja'far, as the next imam.

After the death of Hasan al-'Askari, the Shi'is were thrown into confusion and fragmented into a large number of groups; among them are: a) the Waqifiyyah at Hasan al-'Askari, believing that al-'Askari was considerd the Mahdi. Some of these thought that he had not died but had gone into occultation while another group thought he had died but had been raised to life again. b) the Cessation of the imamate, considering that just as prophecy had ceased with Muhammad, so it was possible for the imamate to have ceased with al-'Askari who had neither son nor successor. c) Muhammadiyah, maintaining that al-Hadi had designed his son Muhammad, who predeceased him, as the

imam; since neither Hasan al-'Askari because of his childlessness, nor Ja'far because of his immorality, fulfilled the conditions required for the imamate. One group maintained Muhammad had not died but was the Mahdi in concealment. d) the Ja'fariyyah, considering that al-'Askari had died without a son and then the imamate belonged to his brother Ja'far.

Apart from those sects, there was a group named *Ghulat.* It seems to have been absorbed by the Kaisaniyah, that believed in Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyah's Mahdism followed his son Abu Hashim 'Abdullah. The death of Abu Hashim was turning point in the history of the *ghulat*, for it caused the split in consequence of which they separated into two distinct groups. One upheld the various successors of Abu Hashim and believed in his concealment and return and eventually transplanted themselves into Iran, where they grew into the Kharramite revolutionary movement towards the end of the Umayyad period. The other group overlapped the Kaisanite stage, remained in Kufah, and somehow connected itself with the Husainid imams. Among their extremist teachings are that they preached that the imams were the incarnations of God, that the divine particle incarnate to 'Ali bin Abu Talib enabled him to know the unseen, foretell the future, and to fight against the infidels, that the power of the invisible angelic world was in 'Ali like a lamp within a niche in a wall, and that God's light was in 'Ali as the flame in a lamp. (Jafri, 200: 301).

Al-Shahrastani, in his book *al-Milal wa an-Nihal*, divided Shi'ah into five different sects:

1. Kaisaniyyah, these are followers of Kaisan, a *maula* of 'Abi bin Abu Talib. His followers believed in him in a way that exceeded

all bounds; for example, they held that his knowledge embrace all sciences. They have a doctrine that religion consists of obedience to a man. Hence they interpreted the fundamental religious duties such as: prayer, fasting, alms, pilgrimage and the rest in term of certain person. There are several divisions in this sect: Mukhtariyyah, Hashimiyyah, Bayanniyyah and Rizamiyyah.

2. Zaidiyyah, these are followers of Zaid bin 'Ali bin al-Husain bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib. They hold that the imamate belongs to the offspring of Fatimah, and can not legitimately be held by others. The Zaidiyyah are divided into three groups: Jarudiyyah, Sulaimaniyyah and Batriyyah/Salihiyyah.
3. Imamiyyah, those who believe that after the Prophet Muhammad PBUH that the imamah belonged to 'Ali bin Abu Talib on the base of clear designation and unambiguous appointment, an appointment made not by referring to him through interpretation, but by indicating him in person. There are many groups in this sect: Waqifa of Baqiriyyah and Ja'fariyyah, Nawusiyyah, Aftahiyyah, Shumaitiyyah, Isma'iliyyah al-Waqifah, Musawiyyah and Mufaddaliyyah, and Ithna 'Ashariyyah(the Twelvers).
4. Ghaliyyah (Extrimists), those who went to extremes regarding their imams, whom they excluded from the limitations of creatures and upon whom they bestowed divine qualities. Sometimes they linkened a imam to God, at other times they likened God to man; thus they fell into two extremes. The Ghaliyyah are divided into: Saba'iyyah, Kamiliyyah, 'Alba'iyyah, Mughiriyyah, Mansuriyyah, Khattabiyyah,

Kayyaliyyah, Hishamiyyah, Nu'amaniyyah, Yunusiyyah, Nusairiyyah and Ishaqiyyah

5. Isma'iliyyah, those who believed that Isma'il did not die, but he was reported to have died for the purpose of concealment, and to be out of reach of those who might seek to kill him. The Isma'iliyyah are most commonly known as Batiniyyah because of their belief that for every "exoteric" there is an "esoteric", and for every revelation there is an interpretation.

CHAPTER III
FATIMID DYNASTY IN NORTH AFRICA

A. Origin of the Fatimid Dynasty

The Fatimid Dynasty or *Daulah Fatimiyyah* is one of the most interesting and controversial empires in Islamic history. It was formed in 909 from territory the Abbasid Dynasty had receded from. The Fatimids established their dynasty in a period that has been characterized as the century of Shi'ah owing to the proliferation of Shi'ah dynasties in the muslim world at this time. (Hodgson, 1974: 39). The Fatimid dynasty emerged as part of the Shi'ah renaissance, establishing itself in north Africa and then Egypt, one of the core regions of the muslim world. From there, they radiated their influence to neighbouring regions such as: Syria, Iraq and the Hijaz. The Fatimid dynasty constituted Shi'ism first sustained experience of statehood and represents a primary demonstration of the exercise of political authority by the Isma'ili imams.

The Fatimid imam-caliphs asserted the legitimacy of their authority in both spiritual and temporal realms by taking the designation of *amir al-mu'minin wa imam al-muslimin* (commander of the faithful and imam of the muslims). In doing so, they took on the mantle of sovereignty over the muslim *ummah* (community) and challenged the reigning Abbasid caliphs who claimed to be the sole legitimate authority in Islam. Underpinning the Fatimid claim to leadership were certain fundamental ideological imperatives concerning the nature of authority in Islam and its application in the

effective organization of society. These perennial concerns arose in the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and have continued to engage the muslims to the present time. The Shi'i notion of the *imamah* is, historically, one of the earliest responses to the question of authority in Islam. It asserts that a just and equitable order can be guaranteed in society only through imams descended from the family of the Prophet, the *ahl al-bait*. (Madelung, 1977: 13-15).

The politically challenging and ideologically charged policies of the early Abbasids, who established their rule in 750, drove a number of Shi'i groups underground, including the later Isma'ilis. In Isma'ili history the phase is known as the *daur as-satr* (period of concealment), which commenced soon after the death of the early Shi'i imam Ja'far as-Sadiq in 765, when his grandson, Muhammad bin Isma'il, the seventh imam of the Isma'ilis, went into hiding to escape Abbasid persecution. The successors of Isma'il are believed to have lived incognito for several generations, their identity camouflaged and their whereabouts known only to their most trusted confidants. The hidden imam was usually referred to by auspicious titles so as to preserve his anonymity during the turbulent environment of the early Abbasid times. This situation continued until the early part of the 9th century when 'Abdullah, the head of the Isma'ili *da'wah* (mission) and future founder of the Fatimid dynasty, established himself in Salamiyyah, Syria, and began to organize his followers into a highly disciplined underground movement for dissemination of the Isma'ili message.Under his direction, a network of *da'i*s (emissaries) spread to various regions of the muslim world, ranging from the Maghrib

(present-day Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) in the west to Khurasan and Sind in the east. The Isma'il *da'wah* appears to have espoused two primary objectives: to establish a state for Isma'ili imam, and to promote his cause as the only legitimate sovereign whose advent would herald a new era of social justice and righteousness.

During the *daur as-satr*, the Isma'ili *da'wah* addressed different social classes in various regions of the muslim world. In many places, it gained support among the people as a social and religious movement against the Abbasids and the ruling urban class. This accounts for the *da'wah* early success among the rural habitants and Bedouin tribesmen of Arab lands, notably in southern Iraq, Bahrain and Yemen. In Persian lands, however, especially the Jibal, Khurasan and Transoxania, the *da'wah* attracted support from the ruling classes and educated elite. This has been attributed to the intellectual message of the Isma'ili *da'i*s which the Persians found particularly appealing, possibly due to their rich cultural and philosophical heritage dating back to Sassanid times. Another factor was the translation of a large number of Greek philosophical works into Arabic in the late 8th century, which gained avid circulation among the educated classes, including prominent Isma'ili *da'i*s who utilized these ideas creatively to articulate their doctrines. (Daftary, 2007: 115-116).

The rise of the Isma'ili *da'wah* was, however, seriously undermined by internal fissures shortly after 899 when 'Abdullah openly declared himself to be the Isma'ili imam, a significant group rejected his claim, for they were committed to awaiting the return of Muhammad bin Isma'il from his concealment more than a century

earlier. Led by Hamdan Qarmat, one of the leading *da'i*s of Iraq, the dissidents considered 'Abdullah to be only a deputy of the hidden imam who, they maintained, was still alive and would emerge as the messianic Mahdi. Hamdan and his followers, who came to be known collectively as the Qaramitah, renounced their allegiance to 'Abdullah, established their stronghold in Bahrain and became among the most embittered enemies of the Fatimids. In the 10th century, the Qaramitah grew into a powerful militant force, attacking parts of Iraq and Syria, and posing a severe challenge to both the Abbasid and Fatimid authorities.

The rise of the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa was aided by the decline of Abbasid power, which was on the wane by the middle of the 9th century. The Abbasid caliphs' depleting authority in Iraq undermined their ability to govern their vast empire. Complex challenges created by Turkish slave soldiers and their commanders diminished the dynasty's control over its outlying provinces, enabling new forces to emerge and assert themselves on the fringes of the Abbasid empire. The impairment of Abbasid power catalyzed the burgeoning Isma'ili *da'wah* across the muslim world. This was especially evident in North Africa, one of the earliest regions of *da'wah* activity. In 762-763, Ja'far as-Sadiq sent two *da'i*s: al-Hulwani and Abu Sufyan, to the Maghrib to spread his cause. More than a century later, in 893, the pioneering Isma'ili *da'i* Abu 'Abdillah as-Shi'i arrived in the mountainous Berber region of eastern Algeria. He lived among Kutama tribesmen for nearly sixteen years, preaching the Isma'ili doctrine, uniting them under his leadership and launching

military operations against the ruling Aghlabid authorities. Thereafter he was able to extend his conquest and eventually overthrow the dynasty, thus making it possible in 902 for the Isma'ili imam Abu 'Abdillah, accompanied by his son and close associates, to undertake a long and hazardous journey from Syria to North Africa. (Al-Maqrizi, 2009: 5-7).

The Fatimid dynasty in North Africa commenced in 909 with the proclamation of 'Ubaidillah as the first caliph. Ubaidillah claimed direct descent from Muhammad bin Isma'il and, ultimately, from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH through 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah. Although his origins are obscure (and his lineage hotly contested by medieval polemicist), his history is known from the year 899, when he assumed leadership of the Isma'ili movement in Syria. At that time, the movement acknowledged Muhammad bin Isma'il as the hidden imam and believed that he had not died but gone into concealment and would reappear as messianic figure called: *al-qa'im* (the rising) or *al-mahdi* (the guide). Some considered 'Ubaidillah's claim to be the imam, and his assumption of the messianic title *al-mahdi*, as fraudulent. These dissenters considered 'Ubadillah to be usurper and split off under another leader, Hamdan Qarmat; they became known the Qaramitah.

'Ubaidillah was then compelled to leave Syria, and he headed for North Africa, where an Isma'ili missionary, Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i had already successfully proselytized the Kutama Berbers of Ifriqiyyah (modern-day Tunisia). With the support of the Kutama, 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi established the Fatimid state in North Africa. Al-

Mahdi settled into the palace formerly occupied by Abu 'Abdillah and his son took over another. On the following day, a Friday, 5 January 909, al-Mahdi's name and title were proclaimed in the khutbah for the first time in Qayrawan, Raqqada and the other areas of the old Aghlabid state. (Sanders, 1994: 1-2; Madelung, 2001: 10-18).

The coming of the Fatimids marked a new era in the history of Islam because they posed serious intellectual and political challenges to the existing order. As Lewis (1972: 5) said,

> (The Fatimids) …. were moved by more than personal or dynastic ambition. They were the heralders of a new intellectual and religious philosophy which aimed at nothing less than the transformation and renewal of all Islam and the establishment of the universal Ismaili Imamat. As Ismaili Shiites, they refused to offer even token submission to the Abassid caliphs, the usurpers; they and they alone were the true Imams, by descent and by God's choice, the sole rightful heads of the Islamic community. The Caliphate was theirs by right, and they would take from the Abbasids as the Abbasids had taken it from the Ummayads.

B. Fatimid's Rulers and Their Efforts to Develop Civilization

The first Fatimid's ruler, called caliph, was 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi (reign 909-934). He was an able general, a capable administrator, a shrewd but ruthless politician and was tolerant of the Sunnis who made up the vast majority of his subjects. Al-Mahdi instituted several measures to assert his authority immediately upon his proclamation as caliph. The caliph had a seal engraved for himself and ordered the names of previous rulers to be excised from monuments and public buildings. He appointed a governor for Qairawan, and others to the *diwan al-kharaj* (land tax bureau), the mint, the treasury, the *diwan al-*

'ata' (salary bureau) and the judiciary, thereby creating an entirely new administration. He also endeavoured to establish the Isma'ili Shi'i imprint on public life from the very beginning of his reign by decreeing that the Shi'i formula of the *adhan* (call to prayer) be announced from all the mosques. Al-Mahdi further directed the jurists in his realm to adjudicate in accordance with the Shi'i principles of jurisprudence, derived from the teachings of the early Shi'i imams Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja'far as-Sadiq.

The assertive expression of Fatimid authority and Shi'i rites inevitably caused reverberations in the diverse and fragmented milieu of the North African state, provoking resistance from its non-Isma'ili muslim population. Ethnically, the region was populated by Arabs residing mainly in the urban centres, which the Berbers holding sway in the rural and mountainous area. While a small number of the Arabs were Twelver Shi'i by faith and generally sympathetic to the Fatimids, the majority were sunnis of the Maliki *madhhab* (legal school) who deeply resented the introduction of Shi'i law and rituals. It required considerable prudence and sagacity on the part of al-Mahdi and his successors imam-caliph to assuage their fears. Eventually, the Fatimids developed a more inclusive policy, allowing all communities to practice their faith freely according to the *madhhab* of their choice, provided they did not contravene the authority of the Fatimid caliphs or state. This was further evident in the appointment of non-Isma'ili judges, which suggest that the administration of the law, despite its close connection to religious policy, accommodated the other *madhhab*s and was generally tolerant. (Walker, 2002: 42).

On two occasions, in 913-914 and 919, he sent expeditions to take Egypt which succeeded in occupying Alexandria briefly before being repulsed by Abbasid forces. In 921, al-Mahdi founded his new capital city of al-Mahdiyyah, where he also established a shipyard and naval base. From here, he was able to dispatch naval fleets across the Mediterranean, asserting control over Sicily and raiding Byzantine bases in southern Italy. (Al-Maqrizi, 2009: 10-11).

In 934, 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi was succeeded by his son al-Qa'im (reign 934-946). He was a fanatic and tried to force his brand of Islam on everyone. He was best remembered for building a powerful navy and his raids on France, Italy and Egypt. To pay for these adventures, taxation had to be increased. The Berbers rebelled against this excessive taxation. Centered on Sijilmasa, which was a Kharijite stronghold, the rebellion gathered momentum and received support from the Spanish Umayyads. Al-Qa'im was cornered in Mahdiyyah where he died in 946. (Ahmed, unpublished article).

Al-Qa'im was succeeded by his son al-Mansur (reign 946-953). During the reign of al-Qa'im and al-Mansur, much more formidable challenges to the Fatimids came from the Berbers, who comprised two major rival tribal confederations, the Zanata and Sanhaja, with the majority following the Khariji form of Islam. The rise to power of the Khutama, who were the mainstay of Fatimid support in the region and belonged to the Sanhaja, fuelled the fury of the dispossessed Zanata. Consequently, one of their leaders, the Khariji Abu Yazid al-Nukkari, fomented a serious revolt that shook the very foundation of the Fatimid state. Eventually, the Fatimid emerged victorious over

their rivals. Their experience of dealing with the entrenched social, political and economic forces of the region made them seasoned statesmen who deployed a combination of diplomacy and warfare to ensure their hegemony. During this, North Africa phase of Fatimid rule which lasted some sixty years, the Fatimids established the foundation of their state and extend effective control over much of Ifriqiyyah, from Morocco to the borders of Egypt. Under the reigns of al-Qa'im and al-Mansur, Fatimid state emerged as major maritime power, competing with Byzantine and Umayyad fleets throughout the Mediterranean Sea. (Sanders, 1994: 2; al-Maqrizi, 2009: 11).

In 953, al-Mu'izz (reign 953-975) succeeded his father al-Mansur. The accession of al-Mu'izz marked a turning point in the history of the Fatimid dynasty. After three previous attempts (twice by 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi and once by al-Qa'im), al-Mu'izz succeeded in conquering Egypt in 969. The relatively bloodless campaign was led by his general Jauhar, who founded a new capital city, Cairo. Several years later, al-Mu'izz moved his court from North Africa to Cairo, and Egypt remained the center of the Fatimid empire until the end of the dynasty.

Soon after the conquest, al-Mu'izz appointed Ya'qub bin Killis, a Jewish convert to Islam, as his chief administrator. He introduced a series of far-reaching administrative and fiscal reforms that included the establishment of a centralized system of tax collection.

Al-Mu'izz was a highly educated man who was also a born statesman and a wise and generous ruler. He carefully laid his plans for the invasion of Egypt which had been attempted by predecessors

without success. Wells were dug along the route to Egypt, treasure collected and payment lavished on the army to prevent any disgruntled soldiery from sabotaging the campaign. One hundred thousand men were sent to invade Egypt under the generalship of a greed man, Jauhar as-Siqilli (the Sicilian). The invading army was aided by a series of natural catastrophes in Egypt. A terrible famine had broken out in 967, followed by a plague which reportedly killed some half a million people in the capital. Furthermore, the death of Kafur had left Egypt in chaos. On 1 Juli 969, the Fatimi army entered the Egyptian capital.

Jauhar immediately set about building a fortified city, a new capital for his master. The new city was square, each side being less than a mile in length. Maghribi astrologers consulted the stars, waiting for an auspicious omen before digging the foundation. Ropes marked the periphery of the new structures and bells were hung on the ropes to give a signal for the workers to begin digging. The legend goes that a raven landed on the ropes which set the bells ringing and the workers digging before the horrified astrologers could stop them. Since it was too late to stop the workers, the astrologers went back to their books to see what star or planet was in ascendancy at that time; he found the planet Mars, al-Qahir in Arabic, so the new city was named al-Qahirah, otherwise known to the non-Arabic-speaking world as Cairo.

Judiciously al-Mu'izz had sent shipments of grain to alleviate the famine in Egypt and thus win the favour of the starving people. Merchants found hoarding grain were flogged and forced to sell to the

population at a reasonable price. The plague lasted for two years and it was only in 971-972 that a good Nile flood finally gave promise of a decent harvest. Mysteriously the plague disappeared. Jauhar ruled wisely and well until his lord arrived. He had a new mosque built in 970, known as the mosque of al-Azhar, after Fatimah az-Zahra, the Prophet's daughter. Public works on mosque and palace supplied employment to artisans and artists and alleviated the straitened conditions of the city.

Al-Mu'izz also carried out a successful program of propaganda in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, where local rulers recognized Fatimid rule until the eleventh century. Soon the holy cities accepted the suzerainty of Mu'izz, as did northern Syria and, after a series of battles, the rest of Syria. Egypt became the centre of a mighty empire that spanned two continents, but an empire which, though rich and powerful, was ruled by people espousing a different form of Islam from that of the common people. However, he continued to face challenges from both the Qaramatians and the Buyids in Syria, and shortly before his death in 975, Syria fell to the Buyids. (Sanders, 1994: 2; Marsot, 2004 : 12-14).

The reign of al-Mu'izz witnessed the momentous transition of the Fatimids from a regional dynasty in a peripheral part of the muslim world to the most powerful Mediterranean state of the time. Although his time in Egypt was brief, the reforms of al-Mu'izz introduced laid the foundation for Egypt's economic recovery and the attainment of a level of prosperity unprecedented since the advent of Islam. It also held to the rise of an empire which promoted intellectual and artistic

life and initiated the development of a brilliant civilization which reached its full flowering on the banks of the Nile.

In rivalry with the 'Abbasids, who used the Persian Gulf for trading purposes, the Fatimids successfully developed a trade route to India passing through the Red Sea, which came to dominate international trade between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean basin, thus asserting their status as a Mediterranean power. The vigorous maritime commerce that ensued generated substantial revenues for the Fatimid treasury, second only to the land tax income, from customs duties levied on imports of spices and luxury goods from India, China and other parts of Asia.

The evidence of the prosperity of Fatimid Egypt was the emergence of Cairo as a thriving metropolis. The founding of Cairo, which has remained the Egyptian capital to this day, constitutes perhaps the most lasting legacy of al-Mu'izz. The Fatimid capital was not only a strategic centre but also an inland port with robust ship traffic along the Nile, as well as being the terminus of trans-Sahara trade in gold, ivory and other products from as far West Africa. All these factors, together with the Fatimids' substantial investment in construction, contributed to the city's rapid development.

As being a patron of scholarship, al-Mu'izz was an accomplished scholar and linguist with mastery of several languages. He composed a number of treaties and is also acknowledged to have inspired the invention of the fountain pen. He established a palace library which has unmatched anywhere in the contemporary world. A decade before his death, al-Mu'izz commissioned a map of the world that was

subsequently displayed in his mausoleum. (Al-Maqrizi, 2009: 25-28). In 975, al-Mu'izz died and was succeeded by his son al-'Aziz.

Al-'Aziz (reign 975-996) was known a wise ruler who gave his administrators fixed salaries to end any corruption, and he was also the one who imported the Turkish troops. He was dominated by ambition to control southern and central Syria, and in this period, the Fatimid empire reached its greatest extent. The reign of al-'Aziz was marked by peace, political stability, and a properly functioning economy. He was the ruler who consolidated the Fatimid rule and also contributed much toward creating and imperial style of rule. Many new monuments were built by him, and by women of the royal family: his mother and his daughter, the princess Sitt al-Mulk, supported building activity for religious and non religious purposes. This activity was not limited to Cairo alone; it encompassed Fustat and the environs of the capital. A mosque was constructed in the area of cemeteries. Palaces (*qusur*) were built in 'Ain Shams (south of Fustat), and two aqueducts (*qantarah*) were built in Fustat. This physical imprint upon the landscape of the capital confronted the inhabitants with permanent and visible symbol of the regime's might and authority. The life of the population was affected in other ways too. Al-'Aziz showed an aptitude for splendid public celebrations if festivals, and instituted new forms of conducting the ceremonies. To serve those needs *Dar al-Fitrah* was built in Fustat, and open prayer square outside Cairo was renovated. These occasions became dominated by the presence of the regime, and dazzling display of its power and might.

The military reforms were results of the continuous Fatimid drive into Syria. The whole Syrian policy of al-'Aziz was viewed with many misgivings by the notables of Fustat, who asked him not to lead the army personally into Syria (in the year of 978). Later they expressed their astonishment upon the inclusion of Eastern socio-military groups in the Fatimid army. The Fatimid expansion into Syria, whose ultimate goal was Baghdad, had been motivated by fundamental religious-political aspirations and the notables had no chance of altering it. Even powerful persons from within the ruling circles, such as the vizier Ibn Killis, could exert only a limited influence on al-'Aziz on this issue.

Al-'Aziz success in Syria was modest; he repelled the Carmathians from the region, and secure a precarious Fatimid hold over Damascus. The main problem of Fatimid foreign police with respect to Syria derived from inability to formulate a coherent policy toward Byzantium. For the Fatimids it was not a new dilemma; the Fatimid traditional approach to the question of war and peace with Byzantium oscillated between contradictory intentions. The Fatimids maintained peaceful relations with Byzantium, although occasionally they attempted to create and to lead wider coalitions of muslim states against Byzantium. In 979, in accordance with this policy, al-'Aziz proposed to the Buyid ruler of Baghdad, 'Adud ad-Daulah, that they wage war together on the Byzntines. In 987, on the other hand, al-'Aziz was ready to sign a truce for even years with Byzantium stipulating three conditions: 1) the release of all muslim prisoners held by Byzantines; 2) the pronouncement of the Friday sermon in the

Constantinople mosque in his name; and 3) the provision of those merchandise in which he was interested. (Marsot, 2004: 15; Lev, 1991: 22-24). During the peaceful reign of al-'Aziz, the Fatimid dynasty reached its zenith. The name of the caliph was cited in the Friday prayers from the Atlantic to the Red Sea and in al-Yaman, Makkah, Damascus, and once even in al-Mausil. It means that at least nominally his rule covered that vast area. (Hitti, 1970: 619-620).

Al-'Aziz was succeeded by al-Hakim (reign 996-1020), perhaps the best known Fatimid caliph. For the first decade of Hakim's rule, minorities enjoyed privileges. Then they were persecuted, so that many were said to have converted to Islam during that period to escape persecution. Yet the caliph's leading advisers were Christians. Whether Christians or muslim, many viziers were executed, and a special department was set up for the confiscation of property of disgraced public officials.

Questions of foreign policy, especially the relationship with Byzantium, occupied much of al-Hakim. At the beginning of al-Hakim's reign, several clashes between Fatimid naval and land forces and the Byzantines took place. In 998, Fatimid land army, under the command of Jaysh bin al-Samsama, fought the Byzantines in the vicinity of Aleppo inflicting a heavy defeat on them and taking many high-ranking prisoners. This defeat of local Byzantine forces brought in its wake imperial army, led by the emperor himself, to the Byzantine-Muslim border. The Byzantines conquered the stronghold of Shayzar from the Fatimid and manned it with Armenian troops. Ba'albek in the Lebanon valley was the southernmost point which the

Byantines reached. These clashes were not unsual; they fitted in with the pattern of Fatimid-Byantine relations. In 998-999, the men in power in Cairo were involved in an internal struggle; for them these clashes were events of local character satisfactorily dealt with by the Fatimid forces in the region. In 1001, Byzantine messengers arrived in Cairo and, in 1012-1013, al-Hakim sent gifts to the emperor. In 1014-1015, Byzantine messengers were again in Cairo. These diplomatic contacts, like the clashes which had preceded them, belonged to the traditional pattern of Fatimid-Byzantine relations. (Lev, 1991: 39-40).

In the area of developing civilization, among al-Hakim's positive acts was the foundation of a centre of learning called *Dar al-'Ilm* (the House of Knowledge) in 1005. It was a favorite project of al-Hakim and was a true institute for the advancement, preservation and propagation of knowledge and with no other purpose. Moreover, it did not have a direct relationship with the Isma'ili *da'wah* or with propaganda and conversion. In many respects, it was unprecedented, although the *Bait al-Hikmah* frequently cited as a foundation of the Abbasid some two centuries earlier in Baghdad was a possible model. Al-Hakim seemed to want an open and genuinely public academy, one available to scholars and commoners of all intellectual persuasions. He supplied it with books from his own palace treasury on a wide variety of subjects, that he paid stipends to a number of scholars who were to teach there, and that he also provided support staff and furnishings. Whoever wanted to could go there and read the books in its new library, could also copy them using the ink, paper and

pens that were provided, or they could study with the masters who taught the various disciplines in its curriculum. The authors who recorded this information explained that nothing like this new institution existed anywhere else at that time. (Walker, 2008: 20-21).

Al-Hakim was himself deeply interesting in astronomy and his government employed its own chief astronomer, a friend and colleague of Ibn Yunus. Although no formal observatory existed in Egypt at that time, Ibn Yunus with the others actively followed a program of observations, many made from the top of the Muqattam, just east of Cairo. The data resulting from these observations was assembled by Ibn Yunus, along with others known from older sources and collected by him, into a major resource for all subsequent calculations by professional astronomers. He called it the *Zij al-Hakim al-kabir*, in honor of its patron, the caliph al-Hakim. (Walker, 2008: 36)

In a state that had been marked by its tolerance of Jews, Christians and Sunnis, al-Hakim introduced numerous repressive measures against those groups. However, he often repealed those measures as suddenly as he announced them. His eccentricities were a source of encouragement to a small group who believed him to be an incarnation divinity. One of al-Hakim's viziers was a man named Darazi, who expounded the belief that al-Hakim was the incarnation of godhead. The citizens of the capital, who had put up with a great deal in past years, found such belief intolerable. It was not only that idea was heretical to muslims, but also that, having suffered many years of economic hardship under al-Hakim and put up with eccentric

laws, the people felt that this was the last straw. Furthermore, the citizens, who were apt to make fun of everything and every one, were amused at their ruler's interdiction on the appearance of women in public thoroughfares and hung the effigy of woman in the city of Fustat. Hakim was so enraged by the effigy that he sent black troops to burn down the city, which was done. Darazi's theory also shocked the Turkish troops, who besieged the palace along with the population and howled for Darazi's head. Al-Hakim smuggled Darazi out of the palace and out of Egypt, while coolly facing his citizens and assuring them that Darazi was not in palace. Darazi fled to Lebanon where he founded the Druze sect in the mountains. When al-Hakim disappeared and his body never found, the Druze believed that he would reappear to reveal truth and usher at a later time. The rest of the population believed various storied about his disappearance; most of them claimed that al-Hakim was the victim of a murder planned by his own sister, Sitt al-Mulk who wanted that his son az-Zahir to be caliph. (Sanders, 1994: 3; Marsot, 2004 : 16).

Al-Hakim who died in 1020, was succeeded by az-Zahir (reign 1020-1035). Az-Zahir who ascended the throne at the age of seventeenth, found himself under the tutelage of his aunt, Sitt al-Mulk. She died in 1024. During 1024-1025, az-Zahir's chief administrator, the emir Sahs al-Mulk, was losing his power and his grip over the administration. He was supplanted by a heterogeneous group of administrators and courtiers. Within this group the real power was at the hands of az-Zahiri's freedman, the black eunuch Mi'dad, Ibn Badus, Abu al-Qasim al-Jarjara'i and a Persian *sharif* of

the Hasanid line from Qazwin. These four men secluded az-Zahir from contact with other administrators, courtiers and members of the religious class such the chief *qadi* and the chief Fatimid propagandists. In 1024, as a result of internal power struggle among the members of the clique, Ibn Badus was executed on Zahir's orders.

The rise of this clique was facilitated by the crisis of 1024-1025 which had manifold repercussions on the state: the army was unpaid and starving, and riots took place in the capital and the provinces. In these circumstances a young and unexperienced ruler, such as az-Zahir, was easily overpowered by people from within the ruling establishment. The man who eventually predominated over the o ther members of the clique was Abu al-Qasim al-Jarjara'i. He was a man of vast administrative experience and had served under al-Hakim who had ordered his two arms to be cut off below the elbow. In 1027-1028, Abu al-Qasim was appointed as vizier with wide-ranging responsibilities. He was a recipient of any honorific titles.

His reign was marked by famine and unrest internally and by a series of foreign relations failures, most notably with the Byzantines. He was considered incompetent and unable to control the army and its various ethnic groups. Famine and revolt together lasted for six years until 1027, when a good Nile flood brought relief to the country and a plentiful harvest that ended the famine. (Lev, 1991: 38-39; Marsot, 2004 : 16).

Az-Zahir was succeeded by al-Mustansir (reign 1035-1094) who did not provide much relief from the empire's problems. During his rule, Egypt was plagued by a series of low Niles resulting in

intermittent famine for nearly twenty years and compelling the caliph to appeal to the Byzantine emperor for grain. These years also witnessed the eruption of Turkish and Sudanase slave soldier rivalry into open warfare, forcing the caliph to sell the contents of his treasuries in order to placate the troops. By 1073, the situation had deteriorated so much that al-Mustansir asked for help from the governor of Acre, Badr al-Jamali, who held the title *amir al-juyush* (commander of the armies). Badr, a freed slave of Armenian origin, arrived in Egypt in 1074 and restored order in a matter of months. His arrival inaugurated the long period of rule by military viziers that characterized the second century of Fatimid rule. Badr assumed leadership of the civil bureaucracy, the military, and the propaganda mission; and he was the real ruler of the state. (Sanders, 1994: 3).

Under the Mustansir's reign, the cities in Egypt were continued to be developed. A Persian traveler named Nasiri Khusrau, who visited Cairo from 1046 to 1049 described that Cairo was a city of some twenty thousand houses all built of brick, but so carefully was the brick joined that it looked as though the houses had been constructed of stone. The houses were five and six stories high and were surrounded by gardens and orchards irrigated by wells. The shops of the city, also estimated at twenty thousand, were the property of the ruler and represented an annual income of about one and quarter million dinars.

Khusrau, who visited al-Azhar in 1047, found 317 professors and as many as 9758 students engaged in the study of logic, mathematics, law, physics, astronomy and theology. Al-Azhar contained 200,000

manuscripts among which were such treasures as 2400 illuminated copies of the Al-Quran; manuscripts in the handwriting of Ibn Muglah and other master calligraphers, and an autographed copy of the history written by the famous historian al-Tabbari. Access to these library treasures was free to all. A large, fund, established by the Caliph al-Hakim was spent on books, scholarships and on the upkeep of the colleges. Al-Azhar retained the stature of one of the great educational institutions of the Islamic world and still exists as a flourishing university in Cairo. Khusrau's description of Cairo was made during the reign of the caliph al-Mustansir, who ruled longer than any other muslim ruler, sixty lunar years. (Marsot, 2004: 17-19; Noorally, 1975: 5).

The peak of the Fatimid expansion came in the years 1057-1059 when the Turkish general al-Basasiri went over to the Fatimid side and proclaimed the Fatimid Caliphate in Baghdad, the home of the orthodox caliphate. ". . . . for forty Fridays the mosques of Baghdad resounded with the name and style of the Egyptian Caliph and the robe and filigree throne of the Abbasid Caliph were actually carried off and deposited in the palace of Cairo." (Poole, 1901: 139).

Al-Mustansir's vizier, Badr died in 1094, only a few months before the caliph al-Mustansir, and succeeded in the vizierate by his son al-Afdal. Al-Mustansir had already designated (***nass***) to his eldest son Nizar as his successor and it was wholeheartedly accepted by most Ismaili circles. On the death of al-Mustansir (in 1094), however, his prime minister and commander of the army, al-Afdal, proclaimed his brother-in-law, al-Musta'li, a teenaged son of al-Mustansir as the

successor to his father as the Fatimid Caliph. It is easily seen that al-Afdal had a vested interest in the appointment of al-Musta'li, who had no public followings and who would consequently be dependent on his powerful patron. It seems that he had already figured it out before the death of al-Mustansir, as he gave his sister in marriage to this young prince and made the ties with him absolutely firm. Afdal explained to the public that the deceased Imam and Caliph, al-Mustansir, on his deathbed changed his nomination in favour of his younger son al-Musta'li and cancelled his earlier nomination of his eldest son Nizar. He produced a few witnesses to certify the new nomination, and thus put al-Musta'li on the throne of the Fatimid Caliphate. This decision, however, had far-reaching effects on the future aspiration of the Ismailis, who were totally split on this point of succession.

Ismailis loyal to Nizar, argued that the first nomination had never been cancelled and that it contradicted the basic principle of the Ismailis, and for the same principle they had not accepted the second nomination of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, Musa al-Kazim, and had remained faithful to his first nomination in favour of Ismail. Most Ismailis living within the countries under direct rule of the Fatimids accepted the imamate of al-Musta'li but those who supported Nizar as their imam were forced to accept the imamate of al-Musta'li, who was duly installed as the 9th Fatimid Caliph in Cairo. Nizar fled to Alexandria where he had a substantial following, but after an armed struggle was defeated by the armies of his brother al-Musta'li. Nizar was arrested, brought to Cairo and imprisoned till his death. The

Nizaris never accepted the legitimacy of the Musta'lian line, and they worked actively (but unsuccessfully) to overthrow the Fatimid government. The short reign of al-Musta'li was dominated by the Nizari threat and by al-Afdal's relatively successful attempts to recapture lost territories. In 1101, al-Afdal raised a five-year-old son of al-Musta'li namely al-Amir to the throne. (Sanders, 1994: 3-4).

This caliph, al-Amir (reign 1101-1130), was remained under the thumb of al-Afdal until al-Afdal's death in 1121. Al-Afdal's position as military vizier was uncontested, he had the full reins of power in his hands. Al-Afdal was an active ruler much concerned with military affairs. During the year 1099-1105, he used to dispatch Fatimid land and naval forces to Palestine to fight the Crusaders. These abortive missions, as well as his own defeat in 1099 at Ascalon induced him to launch a program of military reform. (Lev, 1991:55). Engagements between Crusade and Fatimid armies occurred and Egypt was invaded in 1117. From then on the Fatimis spent their energies in repelling invasions. This was made difficult by factional struggles which once again broke out within the army and among rival viziers. The streets became so unsafe because of rioting soldiers that people lived in constant terror. Caliphs were massacred by viziers, who massacred each other with equal fervour. The women of the harem became so desperate that they cut their long tresses and sent them to the governor of a province in Upper Egypt. This was the ultimate gesture of despair and a sign begging the man to come their rescue. The governor, al-Salih Talai bin Ruzaiq, responded their plea and came to Cairo to reestablish law and order. (Marsot, 2004: 20).

The reign of al-Amir saw the restoration of some of the power of the caliph, and al-Amir ruled directly after imprisoning his vizier al-Ma'mun al-Bata'ihi in 1125. But al-Amir's rule was challenged constantly by the Nizaris, as well as by marauding Berber tribes. In 1122, he issued a public proclamation that asserted the legitimacy of the Musta'lian line, but in 1030 he was assassinated by the Nizaris. At his death, al-Amir left an infant son, at-Tayyib. A cousin of the late caliph, 'Abdul Majid, was named as regent by factions of the army. However, the son of al-Afdal, Abu 'Ali Kutaifat, overthrew the government, confiscated the palace treasuries, and imprisoned 'Abdul Majid. He also deposed the Fatimid line in favor of the expected imam of the Twelver Shi'ah. Abu 'Ali Kutaifat remained in power for a little over a year and was murdered in 1131 by his opponents among the army, and 'Abdul Majid's rule was restored. A few months later, he was declared as a fully legitimate imam deriving his power from an explicit designation (*nass*) of al-Amir. The infant at-Tayyib had disappeared, and there was no apparent heir. (Sanders, 1994: 4).

'Abdul Majid succeeded al-Amir with the title of al-Hafiz (reign 1130-1149). His authority was contested both by Nizaris, who opposed the Musta'lian line altogether, and by Tayyibis, who maintained that at-Tayyib was in concealment in the Yemen. Al-Hafiz attempted to preserve religious forms; he continued to appoint a chief *da'i* to the end of the rule and it could be confirmed the existence of significant numbers of Hafizi Isma'ilis. However, as much as the Hafizi faction might have striven to preserve their Isma'ilis Shi'ite imamate by facile propaganda in the earlier crisis, the record of

subsequent successions seldom displays the same concern for theoretical validation. (Sanders, 1994: 4; Walker, 2008: 46).

Al-Hafiz was succeeded by his seventeen year-old son who ruled under the reigning title az-Zafir (reign 1149-1154). The young caliph found himself under the tutelage of a military vizier, Ibn Sallar, the governor of the Buhaira province and Alexandria. Al-Zahir's attempt to get rid of Ibn Sallar through the cooperation with Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Sallar's stepson, ended with the murder of Ibn Sallar which was followed by the murder of Az-Zafir himself. Ibn 'Abbas accused az-Zafir's brothers of the murder that he had himself committed, and put them to death. Nevertheless, Fatimid dynasty was not yet extinguished, az-Zafir's five-year old son was installed as ruling caliph under the reigning name al-Fa'iz (reign 1154-1160).

Sitt al-Qusur, az-Zafiri's sister, assisted by the palace personnel sought a way to revenge her brother's murder, and to oust 'Abbas from Cairo. Their choice fell on Tala'i bin Ruzzik, the governor of Ashmunain and Bahnasa. 'Abbas, whose hold over Cairo was precarious, preferred to leave Syria. Sitt al-Qusur informed the Franks who intercepted 'Abbas's caravan killing him and capturing his brother. The murder of the Fatimid caliph and his brothers was avenged, but it had little influence on the fortunes of imamate. The imamate was doomed. In 1160, al-Fa'iz died; and he was succeeded by his nine year-old son who assumed the reigning title al-'Adid. (Lev, 1991: 61-62).

Al-'Adid (reign 1160-1171) came from Hafizi line. All were children, and the state was controlled by powerful viziers.

Meanwhile, in northern Syria, Nur ad-Din Zanji had established his power and annexed Damascus in 1154. This rendered the kingdom of Jerussalem vulnerable and insecure. Zanji was a strict sunni and could not bring himself to ally with the Isma'ili Fatimis, but neither would allow Egypt then became the scene of diplomatic activity, when both Zanji and the Crusaders courted it. Ruzaiq, the strong man in power, had been murdered and once again rivalry between viziers left the country vulnerable. Rival viziers allied themselves, one to Zanji and one to the Crusaders. On three occasions the armies of these two states invaded Egypt; on the last occasion in 1169 the Syrian of Zanji came to Egypt as allies to oust the Crusaders. During that campaign the city of Fustat was set on fire by the vizier as part of a scorched-earth policy to make it of little use to the Crusaders, and for fifty-four days the city was said to have burned with twenty thousand barrels of naphtha.

The Syrian troops who had come to Egypt were in charge of defense and their leader was appointed vizier by the Fatimid caliph. When that leader died, he was succeeded as vizier by his nephew, Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi, known to the West as Saladin. The anomaly of a Shi'i ruler, ruling through a sunni vizier, who was also lieutenant to a sunni ruler, was not lost on Saladin, a fervent sunni, who determined to bring the Fatimid dynasty to an end. In the meantime, prayers on Friday were recited in the name of both the Fatimid caliph and the Syrian ruler. The mention of the name of the ruler during the Friday prayers in one of the signs of kingship in muslim lands.

Saladin's reputation among the Egyptians was enhanced by a series of skirmishes with Crusaders which ended in victory. The

Egyptians, who had not followed the Isma'ili sect of their ruler, had remained firmly sunni in their beliefs and probably welcomed a sunni vizier in a place of an Isma'ili. To re-educate the Egyptians in the path of orthodoxy, Saladin founded three schools in 1170, the famous *madrasah*s which were to expand and turn Egypt into a center of intellectual life once again. The following year, the name of the 'Abbasi caliph was proclaimed during the Friday prayers and the name of the Fatimid caliphs was simply dropped. By then the caliph lay dying and never even knew that he had been deposed by his new vizier. Thus the Fatimid dynasty, which had lasted for two centuries, ended in 1171 which barely a whimper. (Marsot, 2004: 20-21).

C. Decline and Fall of the Fatimid Dynasty

Several reasons may be adduced for the decline and fall of the Fatimid dynasty. One of them was their adoption and retention of a religious doctrine that was ultimately unacceptable to the sunni majority. Fatimid Ism'ilism, as a theology, was remote from the central consensus of Islam, and with the sunni revival of the 11th and 12th centuries its rejection became certain.

The second factor was the weakness of the caliphs, especially since al-Mustansir (the seventh caliph of the dynatsy). The weakness, because of --among other things-- their nomination to be caliph when they were still very young, such as al-Musta'li was teenager, az-Zafir was seventeen year old, and al-'Adid (the last caliph) was crowned at the age of nine years. Because they were still very young, they only as a puppet from “powerful people”; and this condition led to jealousy on the part of the brothers of the caliphs, and create a state of unstable.

In addition, the weakness of the caliphs because of palace intrigue around itself that originated in the sense of injustice in the event of the appointment of the caliph by "interest groups", which was not based on a system or through a will from the previous caliph.

The third factor was the split within the military. In the military, there were three elements of strength. First, elements of the Berbers who fought and supported from the beginning in founding the Fatimid dynasty. Second, the element that made □□it into the Turkish nation as brought by the caliph al-'Aziz. Third, elements of the Sudanese forces which were brought by the caliph al-Mustansir. These three factions were always competitive and occasionally involved in the warfare among them. Open warfare was the most devastating war between Turkey and the elements of Barbarian. Being weak caliphs could not do anything about it. This led to the military control over regions became weak. Finally, areas such extensive dynastic be reduced gradually due to escape or controlled by other dynasties.

The other factor, there was a contest for power between caliphs and viziers. The last vizier of the Fatimid caliphs was Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi, best known to modern readers as the heroic figure who successfully fought the Crusaders. However, he also dealt the final blow to the Fatimid dynasty; officially, he abolished the Fatimid dynasty in 1171.

CHAPTER IV
SAFAVID DYNASTY IN PERSIA

A. Origin of the Safavid Dynasty

The Safavid dynasty had its origins in a long established sufi order which had flourished in Azerbaijan since the early 14th century. Its founder was Shaikh Safi ad-Din (1252-1334) after whom it is named. He came from Ardebil, where his shrine exists to this day. In the roughly two and a half centuries between the establishment of the Ilkhanid Mongols in Persia and the foundation of the Safavid dynasty in 1501, sufism gained popular influence throughout this board territory, organized as distinctly individual orders with institutional bases in *khangah,* the sufi hospice or chapter house pioneered by the Khurasanian Abu Sa'id bin 'Abdul Khair. A number of these orders preached messianic doctrines, as did, for example, the Nurbakhsiyyah whose founder declared he was the mahdi, the individual who would restore justice and true religion to the Islamic world. This was the idea that was strongly developed by and usually associated with muslims who revered the *ahl al-bait* and even more so with Shi'ah, for whom the doctrine of the hidden imam was central to their belief and expectation of being freed from oppressive Sunni rule. (Dale, 2010: 65-66)

Before the Safavid became rulers of Persia, there were instances in Persia where Shi'i sufis battled for political power. The ephemeral Sarbadar dynasty of Sabzawar in fourteenth century Khurasan is the best documented example of an alliance between a sufi *pir* and a local political leader that culminated in the establishment of a radical Shi'i

state. Beginning in the late 1330s, when the Ilkhanid Mongol regime was disintegrating, the dynasty began life as wealthy Khurasanian landowner's tax revolt against Mongol rulers. In 1340s the original leaders of the revolt seized Nishapur, defeating the forces on the Mongol Taghaitimur two years later. Then, in order to attract support from the substantial population of Shi'i muslims living in Sabzawar, the Sabbader leader, Mas'ud , a Sunni, enlisted the support of Shaikh Hasan, a Shi'i sufi living in the city. Shaikh Hasan, who had earlier built up an armed following of artisan and tradesmen, responded to the Sarbadar appeal and tried to impose his Shi'i faith on nearby Sunnis, while encouraging expectations of the imminent appearance of the Mahdi. One measure that Mas'ud and his clerical ally took to legitimize their rule who invite a Shi'i theologian from the long-established Shi'i theological center of Jabal 'Amil Shi'i clerics that occurred in Safavid times. (Abissab, 1994: 114).

In Sabzawar, however, tensions among the coalition of Sunni political leaders and Shi'i religious extremists caused violent conflict, including assassinations. The entire movement imploded around 1380, when a revolt broke out in the city directed against radical Shi'i *pir*, who had established an ideologically rigid Shi'i government in Sabzawar three years earlier. The Safavids succeeded where the Sarbadar landowners and Shi'i clerics failed, at least partly because they combined both political and religious lines in themselves. It seems to have been Junaid who began to transform the Safavid orders into a militant religio-political movement. It was Junaid who married Uzun Hasan Aq Quyunlu's sister and it was he who conducted missionary activities among Oghuz tribes in Azerbaijan and fough

ghazaz against Christians in the Caucasus. Junaid's religious belief are not well known, but his son Haidar, who continued his father's military activities, was evidently a Shi'ah to some degree, even though he was raised in the Sunni Aq Quyunlu court and was married to one of Uzun Hasan's daughters.

Perhaps because of his dual religious and political lineages, he was perceived to be a threat by Uzun Hasan's son and successor, Yakub. After Haidar died fighting in the Caucasus, Yakub imprisoned Haidar's two son in distant Fars province, where the Aq Quyunlu later killed on them. The second, Isma'il, survived and escaped to take refuge in northern Persia, a Shi'ia area since Buyid times, where he lived with a minor Shi'i ruler. (Dale, 2010: 67).

Isma'il did not immediately invade the Aq Quyunlu empire; instead, he led his men against the Shirvanshah. Two motivates may have influenced his decision, namely: the practical desire to test his army against a less formidable enemy before risking a pitched battle with Aq Quyunlu; and a psychological motive, i.e. the desire to avenge the death of his father and grandfather at the hands of the rulers of Shirvan. In December 1500, Isma'il crossed the river Kur and brought Farrukhsyar to battle near Fort Gulistan, Farrukhsyar was defeated and killed. Isma'il proceeded to the coast and captured Baku, but marched back toward Nakhchivan on hearing the news that Alvand had crossed the Aras and was marching to meet him. The two armies met at Sharur. Isma'il had only 7.000 men against Alvand's 8.000 Aq Quyunlu fell in the battle. This decisive victory gave Isma'il control of Azarbaijan. He entered Tabriz, where he was crowned in the summer 1501. (Savory, 1980: 25-26).

B. Safavid's Rulers and Their Efforts to Develop Civilization

The first ruler of Safavid, then known as Shah, was Isma'il I (reign 1501-1524) who was a son of Haidar and a grandson on his mother's side of Uzun Hasan. He announced that the Ithna 'Ashariyyah or Twelver was to be the official religion of the newly established state. Isma'il's commitment to Shi'ah became apparent after he and his followers seized Tabriz from his Aq Quyunlu relatives in 1501, beginning a decade during which they conquered most of the Persian plateu. Almost immediately he began the process of spreading and institutionalizing Shi'ism in a country whose population had been mostly Sunni, although there were substantial number of Shi'as in northen Persia and Khurasan well before the Safavid victories. Early in his reign, Isma'il followed the Sarbadar precedent by inviting Twelver Shi'i theologians from established clerical families in Jabal 'Amil in Lebanon to come to Persia and build up a Shi'i 'ulama establishment that had not existed in Persia prior to this time. 'Ali al-Karaki al'Amili (1466-1534) was the most influential of these early Shi'i emigrants. He first settled in Najaf in Iraq around 1504, and beginning in 1504-1505 he visited the Safavid court several times during Isma'ilis reign and that of his son, Tahmasp, initiating a family network of Shi'i theologians who served the Safavids throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Johnson, 1994: 125).

Within the decade following his capture of Tabriz in 1501, Isma'il occupied the geographic center of the pre-Islamic Achaemenid and Sassanian Persian empires. He did so, though with Oguz tribes whose knowledge of the Shah-nama and the glories pf pre-Islamic Persian kingship was almost certainly limited to inchoate oral traditions.

Isma'il was reconstituting the Aq Quyunlu state in these conquests, and like that of Aq Quyunlu, the ultimate focus on his ambitions was eastern Anatolia, where his father and grandfather and he himself had proselytized among the Turks. After he returned to Anatolia and began winning over more of the Oghuz tribes, he so frightened the Ottomans with his seductive propaganda that the reigning Ottoman emperor Salim (reign 1512-1520) marched east, carrying a religious proclamation that Isma'il was a heretic. In 1514, Salim destroyed the Safavid army at Chald Persia in Azerbaijan, psychologically shattering Isma'il confidence and charisma at the same time. This and subsequent Ottoman victories prevented the Safavids from controlling even Eastern Anatolia and forced them back onto Persian plateau and boundaries that nearly approximate the modern borders of the Shi'i Islamic Reupblic of Persia. (Dale, 2010: 70).

The administrative system of the early Safavid state was complex: on the one hand, the Safavids were the inheritors of a bureaucratic system which resembled the traditional bureaucratic of a medieval muslim state; on the other hand, Shah Isma'il was faced by the problem of how to incorporate into the administrative system of the new state tightly-knit Sufi organization of the Safawiyyah order which had prepared the ground for, and had been responsible for the success of the Safavid revolution. Another factor which complicated the situation confronting Shah Isma'il in 1501 was the mutual antipathy between the Tajik or Persian, elements in Safavid society, and the Turkish, or more properly Turcoman, tribal forces (*Qizilbash*) which had been largely responsible for bringing the Safavid to power but which in many cases came from outside the borders of Persia.

Friction between these two elements was inevitable because, as Minorsky put it, the *Qizilbash* were no party to the national Persian tradition. Like oil and water, the Turcomans and Persians did not mix freely, and the dual character of population profoundly affected both the military and civil administration of Persia.

During the reign of Shah Isma'il I, the various branches of government, religious, political and military, were not rigidly separated compartment. There was considerable overlapping of authority, and relative importance of the chief offices varied from time to time. When dealing with this period, therefore, such terms as: civil, military, religious and political must be used with caution, and must be construed within the context of the actual powers, so far as these can be determined, of the official concerned. Perhaps the most striking illustration of the effect of the domination of the polity by military is the way in which members of the religious classes, such as *sadr*s and *qazi*s, frequently held not only military rank but also military command. Shah Isma'il I had created the office of *vakil-i nafs-i nafis-i humayun*, with the idea that the *vakil* would be his alter ego, with authority second to his own in both political and religious matters. During the last decade of his reign, there had been a movement away from the theocratic form of government which had been a distinctive feature of the early Safavid state. There had been a general trend toward the separation of religious and political powers, and toward the reduction of the influence of the *Qizilbash* in state affairs. He died in 1524, and was buried in the family mausoleum at Ardabil. (Savory, 1980: 31-49).

Shah Isma'il I was succeeded by his eldest son Tahmasp I (reign

1524-1576). He was only ten years and three months old when he succeeded his father on the throne. The Qizilbash were not slow in seizing their opportunity to reverse the trend toward giving Persians a larger share in the governance of the state. They took over control of state and usurped the authority of the Shah for a decade. A Qizilbash chief, Div Sultan Rumlu, summoned his fellow-*amir*s to gathering of the clans. At this gathering, Div Sultan Rumlu displayed the testamentary disposition of the late Shah appointing himself *amir al-umara'* and guardian of the young Shah Tahmasp. (Savory, 1980: 50). Safavid legitimacy apparently ensured his survival as at least a nominal monarch in his early years, as he was passed like a dynastic trophy from one feuding Qizilbash chieftain to another, but throughout his "reign" members of different Qizilbash tribes dominated the military and political offices both at the center and in the provinces. Evidently in response to the Qizilbash threat, Tahmasp appointed many Tajiks or Persian as administrators, in the tradition of Nizam al-Mulk under the Saljuqs. By the middle of the sixteenth century some Persians had intermarried with the Safavid royal family, but they did not act as *atabeg*s, nor did they usually command substantial military forces of their own. Tahmasp also continued Isma'il's policy of building up a *ghulam* force from captured Georgians, and began marrying Georgian and Circassian women, thus breaking with the earlier Safavid tradition of marrying wives solely from important Qizilbash tribes.

The Qizilbash infighting known in Persian history as the First Civil War ended in 1536 with the victory of the Ustajlu Qizilbash, who strengthened their authority throughout the remainder of Shah

Tahmasp's reign. What is probably most remarkable about this period, and the remainder of Tahmasp's reign until his death in 1576, was his ability to survive the murderous, chaotic conflict within Persia while enduring Uzbek and Ottoman assaults on or conquest of some of the Safavid's most economically valuable territory: Khurasan and Iraq. The Ustajlu and Tahmasp still presided over what amounted to a decentralized tribal coalition whose members treated their huge *iqta'* grants as personal fiefs. The weakness of the Safavid regime during and after the years of civil war was demonstrated by the ease with which Uzbeks and Ottomans violated the tentatively established boundaries of the Safavid state. (Dale, 2010: 88-90).

Shah Tahmasp continued Shah Isma'il's policies designed to force the inhabitants of Persia to convert to Shi'ah. Under Tahmasp, the *tabarru'* or ritual cursing of these Caliphs was ordered to take place in mosques and public places throughout Persia and was enforced to, some degree, by roving bands of religious inspectors. The Shah even developed a longer list of ninety individuals to be publicly denounced. These included the great Sunni Caliph Harun ar-Rashid and the Herati Persian-language poet and Naqshabandi sufi 'Abdurrahman Jami. (Newman, 2006: 130). The condemnation of Jami was consistent with and probably a continuation of earliest Safavid persecution of the steadfastly Sunni and politically activist Naqshabandi order, several of whose Persian *khalifah*s were imprisoned and tortured or executed by the regime. (Dale, 2010: 91). Tahmasp reigned for more than fifty years, longer than any other Safavid ruler. He died in 1576 and was succeeded by the fourth son Isma'il II.

Before Isma'il II (reign 1576-1578) came to throne, there was much jockeying for position on the part of the rival factions. It is clear that the Qizilbash did not at once perceive the true nature of the threat to their own position from Georgian and Circassion factions, because in 1574, certain Qilzibash chiefs were plotting on behalf of Sulaiman Mirza, who mother was the sister of a Circassian chief. By 1575, the Qizilbash had split into two factions, one supporting Isma'il, the other Haidar whose mother was a Georgian and one of the Shah's legal wives. Tahmasp himself is said to have favoured Haidar, but he kept his own council, and placed a special guard on Isma'il in case the pro-Haidar faction should try to murder him. When Shah Tahmasp died in 1576, the Georgians and the Ustajlus made an unsuccessful attempt to place Haidar on the throne. Haidar actually placed the thrown on his head, and called himself "shah", but as, luck would have it, the guard on duty at palace that day was composed of supporters of Isma'il who effectively isolated Haidar from his own supporters. In the fracas which ensued, Haidar was killed. Next, the Rumlus and Circassians attempted to enthrone a prince whose mother was a Circassian slave, but this attempt, too, was frustrated. Finally, most of the Qizilbash threw their support behind Isma'il. It became clear that Isma'il II's only goal was to remain in power at all cost. To that end, he systematically killed, or blinded, any prince of the blood royal who might conceivably become the center of conspiracy against him. Five of his brothers, and four other Safavid princes, were murdered or blinded. The only members of the Safavid royal house who had not been murdered or blinded by Isma'il II were his older brother Muhammad Khudabanda, and the latter's three sons: Hamzah, Abu

Talib and 'Abbas; and they had escaped Isma'il II's purge only because he himself was murdered before orders issued for their execution had been carried out. The Qizilbash therefore had little alternative but to place on the throne the prince whom they had passed over previously namely Muhammad Khudabanda. This happened in 1578. (Savory, 1980: 68-70).

As far Shah Isma'ili's death, the political chaos encouraged the Safavid's enemies. The Uzbeks unsuccessfully attacked in Khurasan, and the Ottoman Sultan Murad III (1574-1595) launched a series of devastating assaults in the west, beginning in 1578 and continuing through the early years of Khudabanda's successor, 'Abbas. The fall at Tabriz in 1585 climaxed a series of territorial losses in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kurdistan and Luristan. (Dale, 2010: 92). Throughout this period, Qizilbash chiefs continued to dominate both central and provincial military and political positions, amidst constantly shifting alliances among the tribes. Tajiks, especially Persian Sayyids, descendent of the Prophet, staffed most of the middle and lower-level administrative posts, even when they were practicing Sunni, illustrating the still lagging Shi'i orthodoxy in Persia. One such individual was Mirza Makhdum Sharif (d. 1587) who had acted as chief judge in Fars before becoming an important official in Qazvin, then the capital, during Isma'il II's region. (Newman, 2006: 46). Both Isma'il II and Khudabanda continued to contract marriage alliances with important Qizilbash and Tajik families. Georgian and Circassian slaves also gained increasing influence throughout this chaotic era, alerting observers to the increasingly important role of *ghulam* elements in the Safavid state had had been growing since the reign of

Shah Tahmasp. (Dale, 2010: 92).

Shah Khudabanda tried to win the favour of his subjects by a policy of lavish grants from the treasury. All the Qizilbash chiefs who were appointed to provincial posts received their pay and allowances for one year and some cases for two. The large stocks of robes of honour which had been accumulated in the treasury were distributed to *amir*s, to office-holders, to financial agents, *kalantar*s (mayors) and other provincial dignities. The troops of the royal bodyguard, who had received no pay for ten years, were paid all the arrears to them. New positions of the status of *amir* were added to the establishment of each Qizilbash tribes. Since all provinces had already been assigned as *fief*s (the normal form of payment), the payment of these newly created *amir*s continued yet another drain on the royal treasury, which rapidly became exhausted. This royal largesse did not produce good government. The civilian population complained of lack security. The Qizilbash, seeing that new offices and perquisites apparently there for asking, demanded more.

The general impression created abroad by the administration of Shah Khudabanda was one of the weakness and discord within the state. The traditional enemies of the Safavids, the Ottomans and Uzbeks, were not slow in attacking Persia to see whether this impression was correct. The Uzbeks again ravaged Khurasan, and in the west, the Ottomans was definitely broken when Sultan Murad sent an army for more than 100.000 men, which included a large force of Crimean Tatars, to invade Azerbaijan in 1578. The Safavid forces suffered defeat after defeat. In 1579-1580, Hamzah Mirza and the *vizier* Mirza Salman made a successful counter-attack in Shirvan and

Qarabagh, and the Tatar chief, 'Adil Giray Khan, was taken prisoner. (Savory, 1980: 72).

In 1588, Shah Muhammad Khudabanda handed over the insignia of kingship to his son, who was crowned Shah Abbas I. The kingmaker, Murshid Quli Khan Ustajlu, was for the moment the most powerful man in Safavid state, and he assumed the title of *vakil* of the Supreme *Divan* as token of that fact. (Savory, 1980: 72-75).

When Shah 'Abbas I (reign 1588-1629), deposed his father and inherited the Safavid throne at age eighteen in the midst of the second Qizilbash civil war, he reigned but did not rule over the territory of Persia. In the west and north west, almost all provinces lying along the border with the Ottoman empire had been occupied by the Ottomans; in the east, half the province of Khurasan had been overrun by Uzbek. On the domestic scene, the twelve years that had elapsed since the death of Tahmasp had witnessed a dramatic loss of authority on the part of the ruler; in fact, after the murder of the Queen by Qizilbash conspiracy, the Shah and his son Hamzah Mirza, had been reduced to total impotence. Not only had there been a recrudescence of Qizilbash inter-tribal factionalism in an extreme form, but the incident of the murder of the *vizier* Mirza Salman showed that the fundamental dichotomy in the Safavid state between at the establishment of the state eighty years earlier. In the absence of a firm, controlling hand, the principal officers of state looked each to his own interest alone, and the result was a situation bordering on anarchy. The teasure, as a result of the prodigality of Muhammad Khudabanda, was empty. (Dale, 2010: 92; Savory, 1988: 76).

At age eighteen, Shah 'Abbas I was at least able to assert his

authority more quickly than Tahmasp at age ten, and he and the dominant Qizilbash faction moved against other tribal groups and sufis who challenged his authority. With the resources at this disposal, such numerous and grave problems could not be dealt with simultaneously; it was necessary to set priorities. 'Abbas at once displayed the strong sense of pragmatism which was of the dominant characteristics. His order of priorities was to be: first, the restoration of internal security and law and order, reorganization of the army and reform of the financial system; second, expulsion of the Uzbeks from Khurasan; third, recovery of territory occupied by the Ottomans. In order to free his hands to deal with the domestic situation, and to restore the discipline and morale of the armed forces with a view to taking the offensive on the eastern front, 'Abbas took the painful decisive step of signing a peace treaty with the Ottoman in 1589-1890 which ceded to the enemy some of Persia's richest provinces, namely: Azerbaijan, Qarabagh, Qarajadagh and parts of Georgia, Luristan and Kurdistan. The acceptance of such humiliating peace terms was an indication of the weakness of 'Abbas's position at his accession. (Dale, 2010: 92; Savory, 1988: 76-77).

The internal politio-military challenges to 'Abbas authority coincided with, and no doubt encouraged and were encouraged by, spiritual challenges. Between 1587 and 1589-1590, certain sufi elements openly questioned 'Abbas I about the identity of their *pir*, implying that the still-living Khudabanda remained the order's head. The reaction of the young 'Abbas, and histribal backers, to such overt disloyalty to the person of the shah was absolute: the sufis were executed. So, too, in 1592-1593, was the leader of sufis in Lahijan

which had supported Isma'il I when he was in hiding in Gilan but who, in this period, also questioned the identity of 'Abbas as the present *pir*. (Newman, 2006: 51).

To support his power, 'Abbas turned to the "third force" which Shah Tahmasp had introduced into the state, namely, the Circassians, Georgians and Armenians termed the *ghulam*s (slaves) of the shah, who after conversion to Islam, had been trained for service either in the army or in some branch of the administration of the royal household. The term *ghulam* invites an obvious comparison with the Ottoman *qapi-qullari,* or slaves of the Porte: indeed, the term *qullar* soon entered into Safavid usage too. 'Abbas immediately set about levying , from the ranks of *ghulam*s, several regiments which constituted the nucleus of a standing army. The concept of standing army was in itself an innovation in Persia Islamic times. Throughout the mediaeval Islamic period, armies had been levied on a tribal basis in times of need, and mobilization was a relatively lengthy and cumbersome process. The ruler, who might or might not possess a small bodyguard, had to maintain his position by his personal prestige and whatever other factors constituted the basis of his own particular authority. By creating new *ghulam* regiments, 'Abbas formed an army which was always available, was able to go into action at short notice and, most important of all, owed no allegiance except to the Shah in person. The existence of the new standing army enabled 'Abbas to deal ruthlessly with the slightest sign of recalcitrance on the part of the Qizilbash. (Savory, 1980: 78-79; Dale, 2010: 94).

By the end of the reign, the proportion of provincial governorships held by *ghulam*s was something like a half the total,

and it has been calculated that they constituted some 20% of all important *amir*s. According to information which has been extracted from the most important historian of the reign, Iskandar Beg Munshi, of the 89 principal *amir*s, 74 were Qizilbash and 15 *ghulam*. It is important to note here both how great had been the inroads on power and influence made by the new military class and the fact that the Qizilbash, however, had by no means been totally superseded. Their stranglehold over the state had been broken by Shah 'Abbas's vigorous and effective measures, and he had further weakened them by, in some cases, breaking up the tribes and settling them in widely separated parts of the country. The Qaja tribe, for example, was divided into three, and the branches settled in Ganja, Astarabad and Marv. Even so, the Qizilbash tribes remained an important, if less central, element in the state, and continued to supply necessary contingents to the armed forces. (Morgan, 1988: 137).

During the years up to 1598, Shah 'Abbas transferred the capital from Qazwin to Isfahan. Qazwin had been the capital for half a century, but it does not seem to have become any way a great metropolis, as Tabriz had been before. 'Abbas's reasons for making a further move are less obvious. He is said to have had a strong personal liking for Isfahan, and he may have felt that to shift to his favourite city would give him his best opportunity for building his ideal capital. Isfahan was more centrally placed than Qazwin, which may have been a relevant factor; and it is situated in a fertile and well-watered area, with a river, the Zayanda-rud, flowing through it. Isfahan was, of course, already a great and famous city with a long and distinguished history behind it, including a period as capital under the Saljuqs. As a

leader of of Shi'ah and his position as propagator of the faith, 'Abbas founded a new mosque also contained two schools, at the Eastern and Western corners of the courtyard, with underground rooms so that teaching could be continued in the hot summer and cold winter months. Further projecting power and authority, a unique double –dome structure was utilized in the mosque different places on the road from Kashan. The 616 mosque inscription, completed by Ali Riza 'Abbasi, stated that the command to build the mosque had been issued by 'Abas "the Husainid, the Mussavid", and recalled the memory of Tahmasp, 'Abbas grandfather. Other inscription, such as the Prophet's statement, "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate", attested to the distinctly Alid nature of the project and, hence, the very 'Alid commitments of its patron.

Outside the capital from early on his reign, 'Abbas was an especial pattern of Mashhad, site of the shrine of the eight Imam. 'Abbas visited the shrine twelve times, often in the course of military campaigns. He also orderd much restoration work undertaken, and made numerous endowments, to the shrine and commanded that the bodies of Isma'il II and his own Mazandarani mother Khair an-Nisa Marashi be moved to Mashhad. The former capital Qazvin and, especially, its shrine, also merited the centre's attention and patronage over 'Abbas's reign. In the environs of Kashan and Natanz also, much attention was lavished on religious buildings. Too, the shah immediately visited the Iraqi shrine cities when these were retaken, along with Baghdad, in 1624, and also two years later, after an Ottoman effort to retake Baghdad was repulsed. He also reached out to the Shi'ah of the Hijaz dedicating, 1605, a substansial portion of the

income of the new *maydan*'s royal Sarai, the city chief Sarai built in 1603, to the male and female sayyids in Najaf and Madinah.

'Abbas I also encourage Muharram ceremonies and the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam 'Ali and sponsored display-clashes between the Nimati and Haidari factions, the traditional factional groups into which Persia's urban population were divided. The Shah also revived the practice of illuminations on major and minor occasions, as sponsored either by court or by sympathetic merchants, although, when such occasions fell during Muharram, they occurred even the disapproval of such court-associated clerics such as Shaikh Bahai. 'Abbas also promoted both the celebration of the traditional Persian New Year based on the solar calendar, where the Islamic calendar is lunar-based, and the celebration of *'id al-qurban*, at least part of which, the procession of camel chosen for ritual slaughter, was the subject of great popular celebration. (Newman, 2006: 57-59; Morgan, 1988: 137-138).

The rapid development of Isfahan, in line with the centre's effort to project its military, political and spiritual authority, had concrete economic dimensions. By 1599, just a decade into 'Abbas's reign, the suburban sectors of Isfahan were said to have 600 *sarai*s, many serving as centres for specific professions for merchants from a particular regions, and the owners of many which, like other urban *sarai*s, constituted the revenues there from *waqf* to schools, mosques and hospices. Under 'Abbas I, Isfahan became a prosperous city. Merchants from China, India, Central Asia, Arabia, Turkey and Europe flocked to Isfahan to buy luxury items produced by Safavid

craftsmen. Thousands of skilled Armenian artisans were transferred from Julfa on the present Persia-Soviet border in Azarbeijan to New Julfa, a suburb of Isfahan on the right bank of the Zayanda-rud. In addition to merchants seeking trading privileges, many other Europeans came to Isfahan: ambassadors from Spain, Portugal and England; representatives of foreign monastic orders such as the Carmelites, the Augustinians and the Capuchim friars, who were given permission to proselytize and establish convents in Persia. Intense commercial rivalry in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean between the Dutch, the Portuguese and the English meant the development of diplomatic relations between Persia and the west. In all things a pragmatist, 'Abbas I realized that an attitude of religious tolerant toward Christian fathers would establish a climate in which trade with Europe could flourish. Similarly, his development of Mashhad as a major centre of Shi'i pilgrimage kept in Persian coffers large sums of money which might otherwise have been spent at the other principal Shi'i shrines, Karbala, Najaf, Kazimain and Samarra, all of which are located in Mesopotamia and were for a large part of 'Abbas reign in Ottoman hands. (Newman, 2006: 60; Savory, 1980: 100-101).

To develop intellectual tradition, Shah 'Abbas I established the institutional infrastructure for an indigenous Persian clergy, which hidherto relied largely on emigrants, but only 1621 did a native Persian, Mir Muhammad Baqir-I Damad, become a *Shaikh al-Islam*, although on his mother's side he too was descended from the Karaki family of Lebanese Shi'i scholars. 'Abbas's capital, Isfahan, became the well-funded theological center of a clergy whose intimate court

connections helped to persuade many that it was correct to support the political authority of the dynasty for as long as the true twelfth Imam remained in eschatological concealment. The increasing influence and comparable intolerance of many Shi'i 'ulama was manifested in these men's output of theological tracts, their harassment or persecution of non-muslims and sufis, and their growing influence at court. The growth of clerical influence to a degree unimaginable in either the Ottoman or Mughal Empires was manifest by the attitudes of the last Safavid shah, who was nicknamed "Mulla" Husain.

Within the Persian Shi'i clergy two major groups struggled for prominence. These groups, the Akhbaris and Usulis, differed on fundamental points of Shi'i theology, and their theological disputes mirrored, to a signifant degree, sosio-economic and educational distinction. Akhbaris tended to be clerics from small towns or rural area and to be less well educated; the most prominent exceptions to this pattern were the members of Majlisi family who became dominant figures in Isfahan in the mid to late seventeenth century. Akhbaris were often hostile to sufis or to the muslims they suspected of mystical piety, although some famous Akhbari clerics in Isfahan were symphatetic to sufi beliefs and practices. Akhbaris were Shi'i traditionalists or fundamentalists. They mistrusted rationalism and argued that *akhbar*, the reports or traditions of the Shi'i Imams, offered the only true *tafsir* or interpretation of the meaning of Al-Quran and prophetic hadith. Their position was based firmly on the Shi'i assumption that only those descended from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH could understand the esoteric meaning of Al-Quran; they therefore asserted that these *akhbar* represented the final

and sacred Shi'i tradition. In contrast to the Akhbaris, Usulis were concentrated in such cities as Shiraz and Isfahan and were often educated. They were rationalist, and contended that the *akhbar*s must be interpreted and tested. Clerics had to practice *ijtihad* or interpretation, as the meaning of the texts was not easily understood. The *mujtahid*s, senior 'ulama who interpreted the texts, therefore occupied a special place in Shi'i society, and wielded far greater power than most 'ulama in sunni countries. Moderate Usulis, like moderate Akhbaris, accepted the necessity of cooperating with secular rulers such as the Safavids, but extreme Usulis advocated direct clerical rule, a goal they finally achieved in Iran after the 1979 revolution. (Dale, 2010: 191-192).

Shah 'Abbas I died in January 1629, and he was succeeded by his eldest son, Sam Mirza, who was in the eighteenth year old, whom 'Abbas had in fact designed his heir just days before his death. In February 1629, just weeks after 'Abbas death Sam Mirza was elevated to the throne as Shah Safi I. (Newman, 2006: 73). The political configurations underpinning Safi's rule, identified here by reference to their respective *vizier*s Khalifah Sultan and Saru Taqi, adopted a variety of responses to these internal and external challenges. Khalifah Sultan and those who promoted Safi's accession strove on solidify the support of same configuration of Turk, Tajik and *ghulam* at the centre during 'Abas' later years. In the face of internal and external challenges, with the messianic challenges in particular attesting to rising spiritual disquiet, the centre, following a familiar patters, promoted the new shah's close association with both the faith and such its chief practitioners, including Mir Damad, as had been

among 'Abbas clerical associates.

At the same time, the impact of Safi's payments to central and provincial elites, the Ottoman wars and Gharib Shah's rebellion at the resultant respective reduction in overland trade and silk production forced a financial rethink. Cancelled were Safi's grandfather's very expensive effort to divert the waters of the Karun river to Isfahan as well as the court's silk export monopoly, the latter likely in return for a large, needed, financial gift from Isfahan's Armenians. Indeed, enough Caspian silk continued to move overland to the Levant ports that the centre remained more interested in its ties with those Armenian merchants who oversaw that trade than in cultivating the foreign trading companies. It was during Shah 'Abbas's reign and later that the number of Armenian communities in Italy and Holland began to grow rapidly. While Shah 'Abbas's successors loosened Safavid state control over the silk trade, the Armenians adapted the changes, and even as the Safavid state began to deteriorate in the late seventeenth century, many Armenian merchants continued to prosper. (Newman, 2006: 76; Dale, 2010: 124).

In May 1642, Shah Safi died at the early age of thirty-two, as he was making preparation for an expedition to recover Qandahar from the Moguls. There seems to be general agreement that he was addicted to opium, and according to some, prescribed alcoholic drinks by his physicians to counteract the evel effects of the opium. The combined effect was said to have debilitated his constitution. (Savory, 1980: 231).

Shah Safi I was succeeded by his son, 'Abbas II, who came to the throne on 12 May 1642 at the age of eight and a half. In many ways,

'Abbas II (reign 1642-1666) resembled his grandfather and namesake, 'Abbas I was a strong and vigorous ruler, he from his accession displayed decisiveness and determination, although so young. For example, in 1645, when he was still only twelve years of age, the *vizier* Saru Taqi was assassinated by a group of Qizilbash chiefs led by the Qurchibashi, one of the most powerful officers of state; a few days later, 'Abbas II had all the assassins executed. Like his grandfather, he had a passion for justice, and complaints of malfeasance and oppression on the part of government officials were dealt with speedy; in fact, 'Abbas II spent three days a week presiding over an official tribunal (*divan-i 'adalat*), which dealt with suits brought both by the military and by civilians, and two more days hearing grievances from all parts of the empire. Like his grandfather, too, he was in general tolerant in religious matters, and allowed the Catholic orders considerable freedom of action. A notable exception, however, was his treatment of the Jews. At the instigation of his *vizier*, Muhammad Bek, he decreed that not only the Jews resident at Isfahan but Jews throughout the Safavid empire should make public profession of their conversion to Islam, and should receive instruction in the Islamic faith. Some 100.000 Jews are said to have outwardly embraced Islam but to have continued to practice their religion in secret. (Savory, 1980: 231).

Shah 'Abbas II two most memorable monuments are the Chihil Sutun palace and Khadju bridge. The palace, completed in 1647 not far from the *maida;* it is a large rectangular structure with high columned porch or *talar* that echoes the Achaemenid audience halls of Darius and Xerxes, and it was used for coronations, diplomatic

receptions, and entertainment. The Chihil Sutun features eighteen columns on the porch, and further two just behind are reflected in a pool, thus giving name *chihil sutun* or "forty columns" to the building. Surrounded by gardens, it features historical wall paintings as well as traditional Persian and European styles. The historical paintings concern Safavid relations with its eastern neighbors, and one depicts Humayun's reception in Persia by Shah Tahmasp. These paintings may reflect Shah 'Abbas II's preoccupation with reconquering Qandahar from the Mughals, which he accomplished in 1649. The Chihil Sutun might be interpreted as 'Abbas II's own perception of his reign as a kind of Safavid golden age. As the beautifully conceived Khadju bridge, it is built on the site of a former structure, and serves both wheeled vehicle and, on a series of roofed, arcaded passageways on either side of the roadway, pedestrian traffic. The Khadju bridge also serves as an imaginative urban gathering place because of the stone steps that lead from the covered pedestrian walkways down to the river, stimulating contemplation, smoking, and family picnics. He also constructed a dam on the Zayanda-rud in 1654. Shah 'Abbas II, like his grandfather, was interested in the arts and in the erection of public building. He was keenly interested in painting, both Oriental and Western, and he liked to try his hand at painting himself. (Dale, 2010: 218; Savory, 1980: 232).

Shah 'Abbas II and members of the royal family were associated with a number of activities in promotion of the faith. Shah Safi was buried in Qum, and Shah'Abbas II himself ordered repairs to the shrines in Ardabil, Qum and Mashhad, and to Friday mosques in Kashan, Qazvin, Qum and Isfahan. Dilaram Khanum, the mother of

Shah Safi and 'Abbas II's grandmother, built two schools, in 1645-1646 and 1647-1648. Maryam Bekum, Shah Safi's daughter, built a school and a mosque. In the immediate aftermath of Zuhab, the *vizier* Saru Taqi had commenced a number of religious building projects in the last years of Shah Safi's reign; some of these were only completed after Shah 'Abbas II's accession. Between 1656 and 1663, the Tajik Hakim Daud, Shah 'Abbas II's physician, erected a large mosque which retained the standard four *ayvan* plan and a two-storey arcade. However, it also featured a simpler structural pattern and brick and tile surface, which marked an interesting variation on the style which had predominated under 'Abbas I. Private individuals, some with familiar names, also made notable contributions to the city's spiritual infrastructure, thereby endorsing the legitimacy of Safavid association with, and monopoly over, the faith and proclaiming their association therewith.

If his vizier Muhammad Mahdi was not himself keen on "popular" discourse, Shah 'Abbas II, as earlier shahs, continued the centre's sponsorship of the annual Muharram ritual and permitted the public fractional fighting between the Haidari and Nimatis throughout the realm's cities which reached its height at 'Ashura. Indeed, Shah 'Abbas encouraged Shi'i festivals and celebrations of all sorts, many involving illumination of bridges or portions of the city, and many of which he himself actively stage managed. Such activities, also encouraged outside the capital, enhanced the spiritual legitimacy among the populace both of the court as their sponsor and those clerics who took leading roles in their organization. (Newman, 2006: 87-88).

Shah 'Abbas II died in 1666; and was succeeded by his son Shah Safi II, known as Sulaiman (reign 1666-1694). The transition between Shah 'Abbas II and Shah Sulaiman was the smoothest in Safavid history. He, like his father the son of Circassian woman, was put forth and accepted, without challenge, by the center's key constituents: Qizilbazh, Tajik and *ghulam*, demonstrates the extent to which these differen elements could work with each othe to ensure the future of the broader Safavid project.

What crises afflicted the policy during Sulaiman's reign were mainly domestic and, of natural, sosio-economic and spiritual origin. Natural disasters in fact afflicted the realm during most of Sulaiman's reign. In Isfahan, the effect of the poor harvest of 1666 and 1667 were accentuated by the royal party's return to the city before measures for its provisioning could be fully organized, and prices in the city rose sharply. In 1667, in response to the initial crisis, Shah Sulaiman himself moved to control price inflation in the capital. Two years later, in 1669, the year after the second coronation, Muhammad Karaki, *vizier* since 1661, was replaced by Shaikh 'Ali Khan of the Zangana Kurds; the latter, although in fact sunni, had along recoed of service to the Safavid project which Shaikh 'Ali had himself also continued. Having, as Muhammad Bek before him, moved many family members and other Kurdish elements into key position of authority, Shaikh 'Ali embarked on a series of measures designed to cut costs and raise revenues. Quickly realizing the impossibility of completely curtailing the outflow of specie, in 1670, the year after his appointment, he instituted a 5% tax on silver sent from Isfahan to the Gulf and thence to India. At Shaikh 'Alis's death in 1689, five years

before that of Sulaiman, his post remained vacant for nearly two years before Muhammad Tahir, Tajik Qazvini notable and author of Abbasnama, was appointed *vizier.* The new *vizier* continued to try to stem the loss of specie, seizing Armenian exports on Dutch ships and devaluing the realm's coinage. (Newman, 2006: 93-96).

Under weak and ineffective Shah Sulaiman, the 'ulama and *mujtahid*s tended to reassert their independence of the Shah, and reclaimed their prerogative to be the representative of the Twelve Imam and thus the only legitimate source of authority in Shi'ah state. It should not be supposed that even strong ruler like Shah 'Abbas I had been able to muzzle the theologians altogether. The *mujtahid*s, from asserting more and more their independence of the Shah, moved gradually toward a position of actually controlling the Shah. Another political force which maneuvered itself into a position of great power during the reign of Sulaiman was the *harem*, and, associated with the *harem*, the office of *vizier*. Another probably apocryphal, but significant story is told about the succession to Shah Sulaiman.

When Shah Sulaiman, lay dying in 1694, he left in undecided which of his sons should succeed him. Sulaiman did not nominate an heir, but is alleged to have said to his officers of state that, if they wanted peace and quiet, they should choose his son Husain; however, if they wanted a strong ruler and an expanding empire, they should choose his son 'Abbas. When Sulaiman was dead, the eunuch officials who guarded and supervised the harem decided for Husain, judging that he would be easier for them to control. Husain was also the favourite of his great aunt, Maryam Begum, the dominant personality in the harem; and he duly became Shah. Shah Husain (reign 1694-

1722), though rather passive and weak-willed, had been a devoted and pious muslim and began his reign as Shah with a series dramatic religious actions, under the influence of the great Shi'ah *mujtahid* Muhammad Baqir Majlisi. These included measures against the sufi religious order, the destruction of the former Shah's wine cellar (the bottles were carried out of the palace and broken in public) and a decree against the consumption of alcohol generally. Provincial governors and other officials were to enforce shari'ah law and any who had failed to do so in the past were banned, as were coffee-houses, gambling, prostitution and sodomy, and opium and other "colourful herbs". The decree was carved in store in many mosques across the country, though that is not to say it was universally unforced. At the same time, orders went out that women should not go walking in gardens without their husbands, linger in the streets without good reason, or leave the harem without permission. By attempting to outlaw the sufis and arrogating all religious authority to the *mujtahid*s, Muhammad Baqir attempted a kind of Islamic revolution. (Axworthy, 2006: 29-30; Savory, 1980: 238-241).

Shah Husain, like his father Sulaiman, had no interest in state affairs, and the harem, the court and the *vizier*'s office were able to dictate policy. The lack of interest in state affairs was a distressing and ultimately disastrous aspect of the reign of both Shah Sulaiman and Shah Husain. Within the empire, this lack of interest signaled increasing corruption and inefficiency in provincial government, Insecurity on the highways, always a sign of breakdown of government, was widespread. Often travelers were robbed by the very officials who were supposed to protect them. In regard to Persia's

relation with foreign powers, this lack interest meant both indifference to the activities of those powers, even when Persia's interests were immediately affected, and a lack of concern about the obvious and growing weakness of the armed forces. The military weakness of the state was thrown into sharp relief in 1698-1699, when a band of Baluchi tribesmen raided Kirman, nearly reached Yazd and threatened Bandar 'Abbas.. Shah Husain turned to the Georgian prince Giorgi XI, who happened to be at the Safavid court, for help in repelling the Baluchis, Giorgi appointed Governor of Kirman in 1699, and defeated the invaders. In any event, Shah Husain did not think there was any cause for alarm, for in 1706 he left the capital and was away for nearly a year on pilgrimage to the two chief Shi'i shrines in Persia. The years after the Baluchi incursion, the military feebleness of Safavid empire and, in particular the defenseless state of the eastern frontier, were demonstrated again, and this time with more serious consequences for the Safavid state. In 1709, the Ghizaly Afghans seized Qandahar and killed Giorgi XI. Shah Husain dispatched from Isfahan Giorgi's nephew, Kay Khusraw, but the latter was unable to restore the situation. There seems to have been friction between him and the Qizilbash troops under his command. The Afghans were not the only neighbours of Persia to sense that the collapse of the Safavid state was near and that portions of it might be annexed without the expenditure of too much effort. In 1715 the Tsar sent Volynsky as Russian ambassador to Shah Husain, he was to conclude a commercial treaty with Persia, and was also to collect as much military intelligence as possible, including information of Persian resources and communication. Volynsky reported that the general

situation in Persia was so disturbed, and the army so demoralized and inefficient, that the country could easily be conquered by a small Russian army. Both Volynsky and John Bell, the Scottich surgeon attached to his mission, reported that Shah Husain left the conduct of affairs of state wholly to his ministers.

It was Mahmud's good fortune to seize the chieftainship of Ghizaly Afghans at a time when only the Safavid state was in decline. Mahmud, having achieved what Shah Husain could not received from the grateful Shah the governorship of Qandahar and the title of Husain Quli (the slave of Husain) Khan. In January 1722, Mahmud marched away to Yazd but he by-passed the citu and marched on the capital; and on 8 March 1722, he could entered Isfahan. After a six-month siege, Shah Husain surrendered the city unconditionally to Mahmud on 12 October 1722; at least eighty thousand people are said to have perished from starvation and disease. On 25 October 1722, Mahmud ascended the throne. (Savory, 1980: 241-249).

In the following month, November 1722, Tahmasp II declared himself as Shah of Safavid (Axworthy, 2006: 64). In Khurasan, Nadir Khan had by the end of 1726 confronted and subdues the Chameshgazak Kurds by fighting them in the open field and besieging their base at Khabushan. This hard-fought success enabled him to expand his area of influence and draw in new tribes further west. He also sent troops raiding in the direction of Herat, demonstrating the broad range of his power over Khurasan. From Khurasan, Nadir Khan assembled an army and began the reconsolidation of the country under his control. Effective resistance to the Afghans, however, was organized by a Qizilbash chief, Nadir

Khan, who offered his services to Tahmasp II. Together they drove the Afghans out of Isfahan in November 1729, and shortly afterwards from Persian territory. Nadir Khan placed Tahmasp II on the throne but was himself the de facto ruler. In 1732, in order to increase his power still further, he deposed Tahmasp II in favor of the latter's infant son, who was crowned as Abbas III. Finally, on 8 March 1736, Nadir Khan abandoned the fiction of Safavid rule and installed himself on the throne as Nadir Khan, the first ruler of the new Afsharid dynasty. (Axworthy, 2006: 67; Savory, 1980: 253-254).

C. Decline and Fall of the Safavid Dynasty

The death of Shah 'Abbas I in 1629 has too often been seen as the beginning of the end of the Safavid dynasty. He was succeeded by Shah Safi I (1629-1642) who was notorious for the systematic way in which he eliminated every other possible claimant to the throne. There seems to be general agreement that he was addicted to opium, and was said to have debilitated his constitution. Shah Safi I was succeeded by Shah Abbas II, who ruled from 1642 to 1667; he was the last fully competent period of rule by a Safavid shah. After Shah 'Abbas II died, he was succeeded by Shah Safi II who was known Shah Sulaiman. He was renamed, superstitiously, to Sulaiman because the first year and half of his reign was so disastrous. There were many crises during Sulaiman's reign, mainly domestic and sosio-economic and spiritual origin. Under weak and ineffective Shah Sulaiman, the 'ulama and *mujtahid*s tended to reassert their independence of the Shah. Another political force which maneuvered itself into a position of great power during the reign of Sulaiman was

the *harem*, and, associated with the *harem*, the office of *vizier*. Shah Sulaiman was succeeded by Shah Husain in 1694. Shah Husain, who ruled from 1694 to 1722, had been described as the most incompetent shah of Safavids. He was similar to some others who had inherited power by accident of birth. Indifferent to affairs of state, Shah Husain effectively brought Safavid Empire to its sudden and unexpected end. The other important factor was the military weakness of the state which was dramatically demonstrated in 1698-1699, when a band of Baluchi tribesmen raided Kirman, nearly reached Yazd and threatened Bandar 'Abbas. Under Sulaiman, the shah was only for show, for the real king was the grand vizier, in which the latter had control over the chancellery (*daftar-khaneh*) and the finance department, and all documents committing the state to anything had to be sealed and approved by the grand vizier. (Floor, 2001: 27)

In *Encyclopedia of Asian History* under the entry of "Safavid Dynasty", Vladimir Minorsky listed the basic causes of the decline of the Safavid dynasty: (1) the disappearance of the basic theocratic nucleus of the state and the failure to substitute for it some other dynamic ideology; (2) the antipathy between Turkish and Persian officers in the military command structure; (3) the practice of converting "state" into "crown" provinces, which solved the immediate problem of finding funds with which to pay the newly created standing army, but in the long term reduced the fighting efficiency of the army; (4) the irresponsible character of the "shadow government" represented by the *harem* and the eunuchs; (5) the degeneration of the dynasty whose scions were brought up in the atmosphere of the harem, in complete ignorance of the outside world.

(6) the breakdown of the concordat between the ruler and the religious leaders. As noted earlier, the latter regarded any form of secular government as illegitimate, but, since they had benefited from the promulgation of Ithna Ashari Shi'ism as the official religion of the Safavid state, they had tolerated, though grudgingly, the rule of strong Safavid kings. Weak shahs, however, gave them the opportunity to increase their power, and an important feature of the last half-century of Safavid rule is the greatly enhanced authority of the religious classes, as they freed themselves progressively from political control. Ithna Ashari Shi'ism was formulated in ever more dogmatic terms by powerful theologians, whose religious bigotry eroded the multicultural society developed by Abbas I.

In short, the reasons for the fall of the Safavid dynasty will have been apparent from the decline in the personal qualities of the rulers/shahs, due in part to their upbringing harem, linked with this, the decay of governmental efficiency and the disastrous reduction in effectiveness of the military forces. It would probably be true to say that a determined assault from outside could have overthrown the Safavids at almost any time since the death of Shah 'Abbas II. It just so happened, fortunately for the Persian people, that before Mahmud set off for Isfahan with less than formidable army, no one had tried.

CHAPTER V
COMPARISON OF SOME ASPECTS BETWEEN FATIMID AND SAFAVID DYNASTIES

In this chapter, the writer will compare some aspects of Fatimid dynasty and Safavid dynasty. The aspects which will be compared are: their origin, their rulers and their efforts to develop civilization, and factors which caused their decline and fall.

A. Comparison of Their Origin

The coming of the Fatimid dynasty marked a new era in the history of Islam because they posed serious intellectual and political challenges to the existing order. The Fatimids were moved by more than personal or dynastic ambition. They were the heralders of a new intellectual and religious philosophy which aimed at nothing less than the transformation and renewal of all Islam and the establishment of the universal Isma'ili Imamah.

Isma'iliyyah are those who believed that Isma'il did not die, but he was reported to have died for the purpose of concealment, and to be out of reach of those who might seek to kill him. The Isma'iliyyah are most commonly known as Batiniyyah because of their belief that for every "exoteric" there is an "esoteric", and for every revelation there is an interpretation. Isma'iliyyah was also known as Sab'iyyah (Seveners) because they confessed only seven imams, namely: (1) 'Ali bin Abu Talib (624-670), known as Amir al-Mu'minin; (2) Hasan bin 'Ali (626-680), known as al-Mujtaba; (3) Husain bin 'Ali (626–680), known as Sayyid ash-Shuhada'; (4) 'Ali bin Husain (658-

712), known as Zain al-'Abidin, (5) Muhammad bin 'Ali (677-732) known as al-Baqir, (6) Ja'far bin Muhammad (702–765), known as al-Sadiq; and (7) Isma'il bin Ja'far, known as al-Mahdi. Isma'il died during his father's lifetime; the Isma'iliyyah or Seveners confessed that he was the last imam who had gone into occultation.

The rise of the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa was aided by the decline of Abbasid power, which was on the wane by the middle of the 9th century. The Abbasid caliphs' depleting authority in Iraq undermined their ability to govern their vast empire. Complex challenges created by Turkish slave soldiers and their commanders diminished the dynasty's control over its outlying provinces, enabling new forces to emerge and assert themselves on the fringes of the Abbasid empire. The impairment of Abbasid power catalyzed the burgeoning Isma'ili *da'wah* across the muslim world. This was especially evident in North Africa, one of the earliest regions of *da'wah* activity. In 762-763, Ja'far as-Sadiq sent two *da'i*s: al-Hulwani and Abu Sufyan, to the Maghrib to spread his cause. More than a century later, in 893, the pioneering Isma'ili *da'i* Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i arrived in the mountainous Berber region of eastern Algeria. He lived among Kutama tribesmen for nearly sixteen years, preaching the Isma'ili doctrine, uniting them under his leadership and launching military operations against the ruling Aghlabid authorities. Thereafter he was able to extend his conquest and eventually overthrow the dynasty, thus making it possible in 902 for the Isma'ili imam Abu 'Abdillah, accompanied by his son and close associates, to undertake a long and hazardous journey from Syria to North Africa. (Al-Maqrizi, 2009: 5-7).

The founder of the Fatimid dynasty was 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi, who claimed as direct descent from Muhammad bin Isma'il and, ultimately, from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH through 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah. Although his origins are obscure (and his lineage hotly contested by medieval polemicist), his history is known from the year 899, when he assumed leadership of the Isma'ili movement in Syria. At that time, the movement acknowledged Muhammad bin Isma'il as the hidden imam and believed that he had not died but gone into concealment and would reappear as messianic figure called: *al-qa'im* (the rising) or *al-mahdi* (the guide). Some considered al-Mahdi's claim to be the imam, and his assumption of the messianic title *al-mahdi*, as fraudulent. These dissenters considered al-Mahdi to be usurper and split off under another leader, Hamdan Qarmat; they became known the Qaramitah.

'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi was then compelled to leave Syria, and he headed for North Africa, where an Isma'ili missionary, Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i had already successfully proselytized the Kutama Berbers of Ifriqiyyah (modern-day Tunisia). With the support of the Kutama, 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi established the Fatimid state in North Africa in 909. Al-Mahdi settled into the palace formerly occupied by Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i. (Sanders, 1994: 1-2; Madelung, 2001: 10-18).

As for the origin of Safavid dynasty, it is different from that of the Fatimid dynasty. If the Fatimid dynasty was based on the sect of Isma'iliyyah or Sab'iyyah (Seveners), the Safavid dynasty was based on the sect of Ithna 'Ashariyyah (Twelvers) or Imamiyah. If the sect of Isma'iliyyah confessed only seven imams, Ithna 'Asyariyyah confessed twelve imams, namely: (1) 'Ali bin Abu Talib (624-670),

known as Amir al-Mu'minin; (2) Hasan bin 'Ali (626-680), known as al-Mujtaba; (3) Husain bin 'Ali (626–680), known as Sayyid ash-Shuhada'; (4) 'Ali bin Husain (658-712), known as Zain al-'Abidin; (5) Muhammad bin 'Ali (677-732), known as al-Baqir; (6) Ja'far bin Muhammad (702–765), known as as-Sadiq; (7) Musa bin Ja'far (744-799), known as al-Kazim; (8) 'Ali bin Musa (765–817), known as ar-Rida; (9) Muhammad bin 'Ali (810–835), known as at-Taqi; (10) 'Ali bin Muhammad (827–868), known as al-Hadi; (11) Hasan bin 'Ali (846–874), known al-'Askari; and (12) Muhammad bin Hasan (868-Present), known as al-Mahdi.

Safavid dynasty had its origins in a long established sufi order which had flourished in Azerbaijan since the early 14th century. Its founder was Shaikh Safi ad-Din (1252-1334) who came from Ardebil. In the roughly two and a half centuries between the establishment of the Ilkhanid Mongols in Persia and the foundation of the Safavid dynasty in 1501, sufism gained popular influence throughout this board territory. A number of these orders preached messianic doctrines, as did, for example, the Nurbakhsiyyah whose founder declared he was the Mahdi, the individual who would restore justice and true religion to the Islamic world. This was the idea that was strongly developed by and usually associated with muslims who revered the *ahl al-bait* and even more so with Shi'ah, for whom the doctrine of the hidden imam was central to their belief and expectation of being freed from oppressive Sunni rule. (Dale, 2010: 65-66)

Before the Safavid became rulers of Persia, there were instances in Persia where Shi'i sufis battled for political power. The ephemeral

Sarbadar dynasty of Sabzawar in fourteenth century Khurasan is the best documented example of an alliance between a sufi *pir* and a local political leader that culminated in the establishment of a radical Shi'i state. In Sabzawar, however, tensions among the coalition of Sunni political leaders and Shi'i religious extremists caused violent conflict, including assassinations. The entire movement imploded around 1380, when a revolt broke out in the city directed against radical Shi'i *pir*, who had established an ideologically rigid Shi'i government in Sabzawar three years earlier. The Safavids succeeded where the Sarbadar landowners and Shi'i clerics failed, at least partly because they combined both political and religious lines in themselves. It seems to have been Junaid who began to transform the Safavid orders into a militant religio-political movement. It was Junaid who married Uzun Hasan Aq Quyunlu's sister and it was he who conducted missionary activities among Oghuz tribes in Azerbaijan and fough *ghazaz* against Christians in the Caucasus. Junaid's religious belief are not well known, but his son Haidar, who continued his father's military activities, was evidently a Shi'ah to some degree, even though he was raised in the Sunni Aq Quyunlu court and was married to one of Uzun Hasan's daughters.

Perhaps because of his dual religious and political lineages, he was perceived to be a threat by Uzun Hasan's son and successor, Yakub. After Haidar died fighting in the Caucasus, Yakub imprisoned Haidar's two son in distant Fars province, where the Aq Quyunlu later killed on them. The second, Isma'il, survived and escaped to take refuge in northern Persia, a Shi'ia area since Buyid times, where he lived with a minor Shi'i ruler. (Dale, 2010: 67).

Isma'il did not immediately invade the Aq Quyunlu empire; instead, he led his men against the Shirvanshah. Two motivates may have influenced his decision, namely: the practical desire to test his army against a less formidable enemy before risking a pitched battle with Aq Quyunlu; and a psychological motive, i.e. the desire to avenge the death of his father and grandfather at the hands of the rulers of Shirvan. In December 1500, Isma'il crossed the river Kur and brought Farrukhsyar to battle near Fort Gulistan, Farrukhsyar was defeated and killed. Isma'il proceeded to the coast and captured Baku, but marched back toward Nakhchivan on hearing the news that Alvand had crossed the Aras and was marching to meet him. The two armies met at Sharur. Isma'il had only 7.000 men against Alvand's 8.000 Aq Quyunlu fell in the battle. This decisive victory gave Isma'il control of Azarbaijan. He entered Tabriz, where he was crowned in the summer 1501. (Savory, 1980: 25-26).

From the above explanation, it can be summarized that the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa dynasty emerged in 909 when the Abbasid dynasty declined. It was the Shi'ah dynasty from Isma'iliyyah sect. Meanwhile, the Safavid dynasty in Persia emerged in 1501 when the power of Ottoman dynasty was still strong. It was the Shi'ah dynasty from Itsna 'Ashariyyah sect.

The founder of the Fatimid dynasty was 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi, who claimed as direct descent from Muhammad bin Isma'il and, ultimately, from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH through 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah. Al-Mahdi who was in Syria compelled to leave Syria, and he headed for North Africa, where an Isma'ili missionary, Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i had already successfully proselytized the

Kutama Berbers of Ifriqiyyah (modern-day Tunisia). With the support of the Kutama, al-Mahdi established the Fatimid state in North Africa. Al-Mahdi settled into the palace formerly occupied by Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i.

On the other hand, the origin of the Safavid dynasty was from sufi order which had flourished in Azerbaijan since the early 14th century founded by Shaikh Safi ad-Din (1252-1334) who came from Ardebil. Before the Safavid appeared in Persia, there were instances in Persia where Shi'i sufis battled for political power. Junaid's religious belief are not well known, but his son Haidar, who continued his father's military activities, was evidently a Shi'ah to some degree, even though he was raised in the Sunni Aq Quyunlu court and was married to one of Uzun Hasan's daughters. From this marriage, there was born Isma'il, who eventually became the leader and the first ruler or shah of Safavid dynasty after defeating Aq Quyunlu in 1501.

B. Comparison of Their Rulers and Their Efforts to Develop Civilization

The Fatimid dynasty which held the power in North Africa from 909-1171 (around 262 years) had 14 rulers or caliphs, namely: Al-Mahdi (909-934), al-Qa'im (934-946), al-Mansur (946-953), al-Mu'izz (953-975), al-'Aziz (975-996), al-Hakim (996-1020), az-Zahir (1020-1035), al-Mustansir (1035-1094), al-Musta'li (1094-1101), al-Amir (1101-1130), al-Hafiz (1130-1149), az-Zafir (1149-1154), al-Fa'iz (1154-1160) and al-'Adid (1160-1171).

On the other hand, the Safavid dynasty which held the power in Persia from 1501-1736 (around 235 years) had 11 rulers or shahs,

namely: Isma'il I (1501-1524), Tahmasp I (1524-1576), Isma'il II (1576-1578), Muhammad Khudabanda (1578-1588), 'Abbas I (1588-1629), Safi I (1629-1642), 'Abbas II (1642-1666), Safi II or Sulaiman (1666-1694), Husain (1694-1722), Tahmasp II (1722-1732), 'Abbas III (1732-1736).

In the following explanation, the writer describes efforts carried out by caliphs of Fatimid dynasty. The founder of the Fatimid dynasty was 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi, who was an able general, a capable administrator, a shrewd but ruthless politician and was tolerant of the Sunnis who made up the vast majority of his subjects. He appointed a governor for Qairawan, and others to the *diwan al-kharaj* (land tax bureau), the mint, the treasury, the *diwan al-'ata'* (salary bureau) and the judiciary, thereby creating an entirely new administration. He also endeavoured to establish the Isma'ili Shi'i imprint on public life from the very beginning of his reign by decreeing that the Shi'i formula of the *adhan* (call to prayer) be announced from all the mosques. Al-Mahdi further directed the jurists in his realm to adjudicate in accordance with the Shi'i principles of jurisprudence, derived from the teachings of the early Shi'i imams Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja'far as-Sadiq. He developed a more inclusive policy, allowing all communities to practice their faith freely according to the *madhhab* of their choice, provided they did not contravene the authority of the Fatimid caliphs or state. This was further evident in the appointment of non-Isma'ili judges, which suggest that the administration of the law, despite its close connection to religious policy, accommodated the other *madhhab*s and was generally tolerant. (Walker, 2002: 42).

On two occasions, in 913-914 and 919, he sent expeditions to

take Egypt which succeeded in occupying Alexandria briefly before being repulsed by Abbasid forces. In 921, al-Mahdi founded his new capital city of al-Mahdiyyah, where he also established a shipyard and naval base. From here, he was able to dispatch naval fleets across the Mediterranean, asserting control over Sicily and raiding Byzantine bases in southern Italy. (Al-Maqrizi, 2009: 10-11).

The second caliph of Fatimid dynasty was al-Qa'im, who was a fanatic and tried to force his brand of Islam on everyone. He was best remembered for building a powerful navy and his raids on France, Italy and Egypt. To pay for these adventures, taxation had to be increased. The Berbers rebelled against this excessive taxation. He was succeeded by al-Mansur. During the reign of al-Qa'im and al-Mansur, much more formidable challenges to the Fatimids came from the Berbers, who comprised two major rival tribal confederations, the Zanata and Sanhaja, with the majority following the Khariji form of Islam. The Fatimid emerged victorious over their rivals. During this, North Africa phase of Fatimid rule which lasted some sixty years, the Fatimids established the foundation of their state and extend effective control over much of Ifriqiyyah, from Morocco to the borders of Egypt. Under the reigns of al-Qa'im and al-Mansur, Fatimid state emerged as major maritime power, competing with Byzantine and Umayyad fleets throughout the Mediterranean Sea. (Sanders, 1994: 2; al-Maqrizi, 2009: 11).

The accession of al-Mu'izz, the fourth caliph, marked a turning point in the history of the Fatimid dynasty. After three previous attempts (twice by 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi and once by al-Qa'im), al-Mu'izz succeeded in conquering Egypt in 969. The relatively

bloodless campaign was led by his general Jauhar, who founded a new capital city, Cairo. Several years later, al-Mu'izz moved his court from North Africa to Cairo, and Egypt remained the center of the Fatimid dynasty until the end of the dynasty. Soon after the conquest, al-Mu'izz appointed Ya'qub bin Killis, a Jewish convert to Islam, as his chief administrator. He introduced a series of far-reaching administrative and fiscal reforms that included the establishment of a centralized system of tax collection.

Jauhar immediately set about building a fortified city, a new capital for his master. The new city was square, each side being less than a mile in length. The city was named named al-Qahirah, otherwise known to the non-Arabic-speaking world as Cairo. He also built a new mosque in 970, known as the mosque of al-Azhar, after Fatimah az-Zahra, the Prophet's daughter. Public works on mosque and palace supplied employment to artisans and artists and alleviated the straitened conditions of the city.

Al-Mu'izz also carried out a successful program of propaganda in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, where local rulers recognized Fatimid rule until the eleventh century. Soon the holy cities accepted the suzerainty of Mu'izz, as did northern Syria and, after a series of battles, the rest of Syria. Egypt became the centre of a mighty empire that spanned two continents, but an empire which, though rich and powerful, was ruled by people espousing a different form of Islam from that of the common people. However, he continued to face challenges from both the Qaramatians and the Buyids in Syria, and shortly before his death in 975, Syria fell to the Buyids. (Sanders, 1994: 2; Marsot, 2004 : 12-14).

The reign of al-Mu'izz witnessed the momentous transition of the Fatimids from a regional dynasty in a peripheral part of the muslim world to the most powerful Mediterranean state of the time. Although his time in Egypt was brief, the reforms of al-Mu'izz introduced laid the foundation for Egypt's economic recovery and the attainment of a level of prosperity unprecedented since the advent of Islam. It also held to the rise of an empire which promoted intellectual and artistic life and initiated the development of a brilliant civilization which reached its full flowering on the banks of the Nile. As being a patron of scholarship, al-Mu'izz was an accomplished scholar and linguist with mastery of several languages. He composed a number of treaties and is also acknowledged to have inspired the invention of the fountain pen. He established a palace library which has unmatched anywhere in the contemporary world. A decade before his death, al-Mu'izz commissioned a map of the world that was subsequently displayed in his mausoleum. (Al-Maqrizi, 2009: 25-28).

Al-Mu'izz was succeeded by al-'Aziz who was known a wise ruler who gave his administrators fixed salaries to end any corruption, and he was also the one who imported the Turkish troops. He was dominated by ambition to control southern and central Syria, and in this period, the Fatimid dynasty reached its greatest extent. The reign of al-'Aziz was marked by peace, political stability, and a properly functioning economy. He was the ruler who consolidated the Fatimid rule and also contributed much toward creating and imperial style of rule. Many new monuments were built by him and by women of the royal family who supported building activity for religious and non religious purposes. This activity was not limited to Cairo alone; it

encompassed Fustat and the environs of the capital. A mosque was constructed in the area of cemeteries. Palaces (*qusur*) were built in 'Ain Shams (south of Fustat), and two aqueducts (*qantarah*) were built in Fustat. This physical imprint upon the landscape of the capital confronted the inhabitants with permanent and visible symbol of the regime's might and authority. The life of the population was affected in other ways too. Al-'Aziz showed an aptitude for splendid public celebrations if festivals, and instituted new forms of conducting the ceremonies. To serve those needs *Dar al-Fitrah* was built in Fustat, and open prayer square outside Cairo was renovated. The military reforms were results of the continuous Fatimid drive into Syria. The Fatimid expansion into Syria, whose ultimate goal was Baghdad, had been motivated by fundamental religious-political aspirations and the notables had no chance of altering it. During the peaceful reign of al-'Aziz, the Fatimid dynasty reached its zenith. The name of the caliph was cited in the Friday prayers from the Atlantic to the Red Sea and in al-Yaman, Makkah, Damascus, and once even in al-Mausil. It means that at least nominally his rule covered that vast area. (Hitti, 1970: 619-620).

Al-'Aziz was succeeded by al-Hakim, perhaps the best known Fatimid caliph. Among al-Hakim's positive acts was the foundation of a centre of learning called *Dar al-'Ilm* (the House of Knowledge) in 1005. Al-Hakim was himself deeply interesting in astronomy and his government employed its own chief astronomer, a friend and colleague of Ibn Yunus. Although no formal observatory existed in Egypt at that time, Ibn Yunus with the others actively followed a program of observations, many made from the top of the Muqattam,

just east of Cairo. The data resulting from these observations was assembled by Ibn Yunus, along with others known from older sources and collected by him, into a major resource for all subsequent calculations by professional astronomers. He called it the *Zij al-Hakim al-kabir*, in honor of its patron, the caliph al-Hakim. (Walker, 2008: 36)

The caliphs of Fatimid dynasty after al-Hakim, did not give conspicuous inheritance of civilization, because they did not have enough power and capability to do so. The seventh caliph, az-Zahir who ascended the throne at the age of seventeenth, found himself under the tutelage of his aunt, Sitt al-Mulk. After the death of his aunt, his chief administrator, the emir Sahs al-Mulk, was losing his power and his grip over the administration. He was supplanted by a heterogeneous group of administrators and courtiers. Within this group the real power was at the hands of az-Zahiri's freedman, the black eunuch Mi'dad, Ibn Badus, Abu al-Qasim al-Jarjara'i and a Persian *sharif* of the Hasanid line from Qazwin. Az-Zahir's reign was marked by famine and unrest internally and by a series of foreign relations failures, most notably with the Byzantines. He was considered incompetent and unable to control the army and its various ethnic groups.

The eighth caliph, al-Mustansir, did not provide much relief from the empire's problems. During his rule, Egypt was plagued by a series of low Niles resulting in intermittent famine for nearly twenty years and compelling the caliph to appeal to the Byzantine emperor for grain. These years also witnessed the eruption of Turkish and Sudanese slave soldier rivalry into open warfare, forcing the caliph to

sell the contents of his treasuries in order to placate the troops. The ninth caliph, al-Musta'li, who was a teenager when he ascended the throne, faced some problems, among others was rejection from those who supported Nizar (the eldest son of al-Mustansir). The reign of al-Musta'li was dominated by the Nizari threat and by al-Afdal's relatively successful attempts to recapture lost territories. When al-Musta'li died in 1101, al-Afdal raised a five-year-old son of al-Musta'li namely al-Amir to the throne. This caliph, al-Amir, was remained under the thumb of al-Afdal until al-Afdal's death in 1121. Al-Afdal's position as military vizier was uncontested, he had the full reins of power in his hands. Al-Amir's rule was challenged constantly by the Nizaris, as well as by marauding Berber tribes; and he was assassinated by the Nizaris.

The successor of al-Amir was al-Hafiz in which his authority was contested both by Nizaris, who opposed the Musta'lian line altogether, and by Tayyibis, who maintained that at-Tayyib was in concealment in the Yemen. Al-Hafiz was succeeded by his seventeen year-old son who ruled under the reigning title az-Zafir. The young caliph found himself under the tutelage of a military vizier, Ibn Sallar, the governor of the Buhaira province and Alexandria. Al-Zahir's attempt to get rid of Ibn Sallar through the cooperation with Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Sallar's stepson, ended with the murder of Ibn Sallar which was followed by the murder of Az-Zafir himself. Ibn 'Abbas accused az-Zafir's brothers of the murder that he had himself committed, and put them to death. Nevertheless, Fatimid dynasty was not yet extinguished, az-Zafir's five-year old son was installed as ruling caliph under the reigning name al-Fa'iz. The boy caliph died

aged eleven and was succeeded by his nine year-old son who assumed the reigning title al-'Adid, the fourteenth and last in a line which had lasted for over two and a half centuries.

After describing the Fatimid caliphs and their efforts to develop Fatimid dynasty, in the following explanation, the writer will describe briefly the Safavid shahs and their efforts to develop Safavid dynasty.

The founder of Safavid dynasty is Isma'il I who announced that the Ithna 'Ashariyyah or Twelvers was to be the official religion of the newly established state. Isma'il's commitment to Shi'ah became apparent after he and his followers seized Tabriz from his Aq Quyunlu relatives in 1501, beginning a decade during which they conquered most of the Persian plateu. Within the decade following his capture of Tabriz in 1501, Isma'il occupied the geographic center of the pre-Islamic Achaemenid and Sassanian Persian empires. The administrative system of the early Safavid state was complex: on the one hand, the Safavids were the inheritors of a bureaucratic system which resembled the traditional bureaucratic of a medieval muslim state; on the other hand, Shah Isma'il was faced by the problem of how to incorporate into the administrative system of the new state tightly-knit Sufi organization of the Safawiyyah order which had prepared the ground for, and had been responsible for the success of the Safavid revolution. Another factor which complicated the situation confronting Shah Isma'il in 1501 was the mutual antipathy between the Tajik or Persian, elements in Safavid society, and the Turkish, or more properly Turcoman, tribal forces (*Qizilbash*) which had been largely responsible for bringing the Safavid to power but which in many cases came from outside the borders of Persia. During the reign

of Shah Isma'il I, the various branches of government, religious, political and military, were not rigidly separated compartment. There was considerable overlapping of authority, and relative importance of the chief offices varied from time to time. When dealing with this period, therefore, such terms as: civil, military, religious and political must be used with caution, and must be construed within the context of the actual powers, so far as these can be determined, of the official concerned. Perhaps the most striking illustration of the effect of the domination of the polity by military is the way in which members of the religious classes, such as *sadr*s and *qazi*s, frequently held not only military rank but also military command. Shah Isma'il I had created the office of *vakil-i nafs-i nafis-i humayun*, with the idea that the *vakil* would be his alter ego, with authority second to his own in both political and religious matters. During the last decade of his reign, there had been a movement away from the theocratic form of government which had been a distinctive feature of the early Safavid state. There had been a general trend toward the separation of religious and political powers, and toward the reduction of the influence of the *Qizilbash* in state affairs. (Savory, 1980: 31-49).

Shah Isma'il I was succeeded by Tahmasp I, who was only ten years and three months old when he succeeded his father on the throne. The Qizilbash were not slow in seizing their opportunity to reverse the trend toward giving Persians a larger share in the governance of the state. They took over control of state and usurped the authority of the Shah for a decade. A Qizilbash chief, Div Sultan Rumlu, summoned his fellow-*amir*s to gathering of the clans. At this gathering, Div Sultan Rumlu displayed the testamentary disposition

of the late Shah appointing himself *amir al-umara'* and guardian of the young Shah Tahmasp. (Savory, 1980: 50). What is probably most remarkable about this period, and the remainder of Tahmasp's reign until his death in 1576, was his ability to survive the murderous, chaotic conflict within Persia while enduring Uzbek and Ottoman assaults on or conquest of some of the Safavid's most economically valuable territory: Khurasan and Iraq. Shah Tahmasp continued Shah Isma'il's policies designed to force the inhabitants of Persia to convert to Shi'ah. Under Tahmasp, the *tabarru'* or ritual cursing of these Caliphs was ordered to take place in mosques and public places throughout Persia and was enforced to, some degree, by roving bands of religious inspectors. The Shah even developed a longer list of ninety individuals to be publicly denounced. These included the great Sunni Caliph Harun ar-Rashid and the Herati Persian-language poet and Naqshabandi sufi 'Abdurrahman Jami. (Newman, 2006: 130). Tahmasp reigned for more than fifty years, longer than any other Safavid ruler; and he was succeeded by Isma'il II.

In his short reign (1576-1578), Shah Isma'il II did not carry out much contribution in developing Safavid dynasty. He just endeavoured to defend his power at all cost. To that end, he systematically killed, or blinded, any prince of the blood royal who might conceivably become the center of conspiracy against him. Five of his brothers, and four other Safavid princes, were murdered or blinded. The only members of the Safavid royal house who had not been murdered or blinded by Isma'il II were his older brother Muhammad Khudabanda, and the latter's three sons: Hamzah, Abu Talib and 'Abbas; and they had escaped Isma'il II's purge only because

he himself was murdered before orders issued for their execution had been carried out. The Qizilbash therefore had little alternative but to place on the throne the prince whom they had passed over previously namely Muhammad Khudabanda. (Savory, 1980: 68-70).

Shah Khudabanda tried to win the favour of his subjects by a policy of lavish grants from the treasury. All the Qizilbash chiefs who were appointed to provincial posts received their pay and allowances for one year and some cases for two. The general impression created abroad by the administration of Shah Khudabanda was one of the weakness and discord within the state. The traditional enemies of the Safavids, the Ottomans and Uzbeks, were not slow in attacking Persia to see whether this impression was correct. The Safavid forces suffered defeat after defeat. (Savory, 1980: 72). In 1588, Shah Muhammad Khudabanda handed over the insignia of kingship to his son, who was crowned Shah Abbas I.

When Shah 'Abbas I (1588-1629), deposed his father and inherited the Safavid throne at age eighteen in the midst of the second Qizilbash civil war, he reigned but did not rule over the territory of Persia. In the west and north west, almost all provinces lying along the border with the Ottoman empire had been occupied by the Ottomans; in the east, half the province of Khurasan had been overrun by Uzbek. Shah 'Abbas I displayed the strong sense of pragmatism which was of the dominant characteristics. His order of priorities was to be: first, the restoration of internal security and law and order, reorganization of the army and reform of the financial system; second, expulsion of the Uzbeks from Khurasan; third, recovery of territory occupied by the Ottomans. In order to free his hands to deal with the domestic

situation, and to restore the discipline and morale of the armed forces with a view to taking the offensive on the eastern front, 'Abbas took the painful decisive step of signing a peace treaty with the Ottoman in 1589-1890 which ceded to the enemy some of Persia's richest provinces, namely: Azerbaijan, Qarabagh, Qarajadagh and parts of Georgia, Luristan and Kurdistan. The acceptance of such humiliating peace terms was an indication of the weakness of 'Abbas's position at his accession. (Dale, 2010: 92; Savory, 1988: 76-77).

During the years up to 1598, Shah 'Abbas transferred the capital from Qazwin to Isfahan. He is said to have had a strong personal liking for Isfahan, and he may have felt that to shift to his favourite city would give him his best opportunity for building his ideal capital. Isfahan was more centrally placed than Qazwin, which may have been a relevant factor; and it is situated in a fertile and well-watered area, with a river, the Zayanda-rud, flowing through it. Isfahan was, of course, already a great and famous city with a long and distinguished history behind it, including a period as capital under the Saljuqs. As a leader of of Shi'ah and his position as propagator of the faith, 'Abbas founded a new mosque also contained two schools, at the Eastern and Western corners of the courtyard, with underground rooms so that teaching could be continued in the hot summer and cold winter months. Further projecting power and authority, a unique double –dome structure was utilized in the mosque different places on the road from Kashan.

The rapid development of Isfahan, in line with the centre's effort to project its military, political and spiritual authority, had concrete economic dimensions. By 1599, just a decade into 'Abbas's reign, the

suburban sectors of Isfahan were said to have 600 *sarai*s, many serving as centres for specific professions for merchants from a particular regions, and the owners of many which, like other urban *sarai*s, constituted the revenues there from *waqf* to schools, mosques and hospices. Under 'Abbas I, Isfahan became a prosperous city. Merchants from China, India, Central Asia, Arabia, Turkey and Europe flocked to Isfahan to buy luxury items produced by Safavid craftsmen. Thousands of skilled Armenian artisans were transferred from Julfa on the present Persia-Soviet border in Azarbeijan to New Julfa, a suburb of Isfahan on the right bank of the Zayanda-rud. In addition to merchants seeking trading privileges, many other Europeans came to Isfahan: ambassadors from Spain, Portugal and England; representatives of foreign monastic orders such as the Carmelites, the Augustinians and the Capuchim friars, who were given permission to proselytize and establish convents in Persia. Intense commercial rivalry in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean between the Dutch, the Portuguese and the English meant the development of diplomatic relations between Persia and the west. In all things a pragmatist, 'Abbas I realized that an attitude of religious tolerant toward Christian fathers would establish a climate in which trade with Europe could flourish. Similarly, his development of Mashhad as a major centre of Shi'i pilgrimage kept in Persian coffers large sums of money which might otherwise have been spent at the other principal Shi'i shrines, Karbala, Najaf, Kazimain and Samarra, all of which are located in Mesopotamia and were for a large part of 'Abbas reign in Ottoman hands. (Newman, 2006: 60; Savory, 1980: 100-101).

To develop intellectual tradition, Shah 'Abbas I established the institutional infrastructure for an indigenous Persian clergy, which hidherto relied largely on emigrants, but only 1621 did a native Persian, Mir Muhammad Baqir-I Damad, become a *Shaikh al-Islam.* Isfahan became the well-funded theological center of a clergy whose intimate court connections helped to persuade many that it was correct to support the political authority of the dynasty for as long as the true twelfth Imam remained in eschatological concealment.

Shah 'Abbas I died in 1629, and he was succeeded by Sam Mirza, who was in the eighteenth year old. He was elevated to the throne as Shah Safi I. The political configurations underpinning Safi's rule, identified here by reference to their respective *vizier*s Khalifah Sultan and Saru Taqi, adopted a variety of responses to these internal and external challenges. Khalifah Sultan and those who promoted Safi's accession strove on solidify the support of same configuration of Turk, Tajik and *ghulam.* In the face of internal and external challenges, with the messianic challenges in particular attesting to rising spiritual disquiet, the centre, following a familiar patters, promoted the new shah's close association with both the faith and such its chief practitioners, including Mir Damad, as had been among 'Abbas clerical associates. In 1642, Shah Safi died at the early age of thirty-two, as he was making preparation for an expedition to recover Qandahar from the Moguls, and he was succeeded by his son, 'Abbas II, who was at the age of eight and a half.

'Abbas II, in many ways, resembled his grandfather and namesake, 'Abbas I was a strong and vigorous ruler, he from his accession displayed decisiveness and determination, although so

young. For example, in 1645, when he was still only twelve years of age, the *vizier* Saru Taqi was assassinated by a group of Qizilbash chiefs led by the Qurchibashi, one of the most powerful officers of state; a few days later, 'Abbas II had all the assassins executed. Like his grandfather, he had a passion for justice, and complaints of malfeasance and oppression on the part of government officials were dealt with speedy; in fact, 'Abbas II spent three days a week presiding over an official tribunal (*divan-i 'adalat*), which dealt with suits brought both by the military and by civilians, and two more days hearing grievances from all parts of the empire. Like his grandfather, too, he was in general tolerant in religious matters, and allowed the Catholic orders considerable freedom of action. Shah 'Abbas II two most memorable monuments are the Chihil Sutun palace and Khadju bridge. The historical paintings concern Safavid relations with its eastern neighbors, and one depicts Humayun's reception in Persia by Shah Tahmasp. These paintings may reflect Shah 'Abbas II's preoccupation with reconquering Qandahar from the Mughals, which he accomplished in 1649. He also constructed a dam on the Zayanda-rud in 1654. Shah 'Abbas II, like his grandfather, was interested in the arts and in the erection of public building. He was keenly interested in painting, both Oriental and Western, and he liked to try his hand at painting himself. (Dale, 2010: 218; Savory, 1980: 232). Shah 'Abbas II and members of the royal family were associated with a number of activities in promotion of the faith. Dilaram Khanum, the mother of Shah Safi and 'Abbas II's grandmother, built two schools, in 1645-1646 and 1647-1648. Maryam Bekum, Shah Safi's daughter, built a school and a mosque. In the immediate aftermath of Zuhab, the *vizier*

Saru Taqi had commenced a number of religious building projects in the last years of Shah Safi's reign; some of these were only completed after Shah 'Abbas II's accession. Between 1656 and 1663, the Tajik Hakim Daud, Shah 'Abbas II's physician, erected a large mosque which retained the standard four *ayvan* plan and a two-storey arcade.

Shah 'Abbas II died in 1666; and was succeeded by his son Shah Safi II, known as Sulaiman. What crises afflicted the policy during Sulaiman's reign were mainly domestic and, of natural, sosio-economic and spiritual origin. Natural disasters in fact afflicted the realm during most of Sulaiman's reign. Under weak and ineffective Shah Sulaiman, the 'ulama and *mujtahid*s tended to reassert their independence of the Shah, and reclaimed their prerogative to be the representative of the Twelve Imam and thus the only legitimate source of authority in Shi'ah state. The *mujtahid*s, from asserting more and more their independence of the Shah, moved gradually toward a position of actually controlling the Shah. Another political force which maneuvered itself into a position of great power during the reign of Sulaiman was the *harem*, and, associated with the *harem*, the office of *vizier*. Another probably apocryphal, but significant story is told about the succession to Shah Sulaiman.

Shah Sulaiman who died in 1694 was succeeded by Shah Husain. He who was rather passive and weak-willed, had been a devoted and pious muslim and began his reign as Shah with a series dramatic religious actions, under the influence of the great Shi'ah *mujtahid* Muhammad Baqir Majlisi. Shah Husain, like his father Sulaiman, had no interest in state affairs, and the harem, the court and the *vizier*'s office were able to dictate policy. The lack of interest in state affairs

was a distressing and ultimately disastrous aspect of the reign of both Shah Sulaiman and Shah Husain. Within the empire, this lack of interest signaled increasing corruption and inefficiency in provincial government. The military weakness of the state was thrown into sharp relief in 1698-1699, when a band of Baluchi tribesmen raided Kirman, nearly reached Yazd and threatened Bandar 'Abbas. Shah Sulaiman died in 1722 and he was succeeded by Tahmasp II.

A Qizilbash chief, Nadir Khan, apparently supported Tahmasp II, but actually Khan himself who was the ruler. In order to increase his power still further, in 1732 Khan deposed Tahmasp II in favor of Tahmasp's infant son, who was crowned as Abbas III. Finally, in 1736, Khan abandoned the fiction of Safavid rule and installed himself on the throne as Nadir Khan, the first ruler of the new Afsharid dynasty.

In short explanation, it can be summarized that the Fatimid dynasty which held the power in North Africa from 909-1171 (around 262 years) had 14 rulers or caliphs; whereas the Safavid dynasty which held the power in Persia from 1501-1736 (around 235 years) had 11 rulers or shahs.

Some advances endeavoured by the rulers or calips of Fatimid dynasty were: improvement in administration area, expansion of region, and development in civilization. Under the caliph al-Mu'izz, the dynasty built a mosque named al-Azhar in 970 which is still exist until now; and his reign witnessed the momentous transition of the Fatimids from a regional dynasty in a peripheral part of the muslim world to the most powerful Mediterranean state of the time. Al-Mu'izz laid the foundation for Egypt's economic recovery and held to the rise of an empire which promoted intellectual and artistic life and initiated

the development of a brilliant civilization which reached its full flowering on the banks of the Nile. He also established a palace library which has unmatched anywhere in the contemporary world. His following successor, al-'Aziz, supported to build some monuments such as: palaces (*qusur*) built in 'Ain Shams, two aqueducts (*qantarah*) and *Dar al-Fitrah* built in Fustat. During the reign of al-'Aziz, the Fatimid dynasty reached its zenith. His successor, al-Hakim, founded a centre of learning called *Dar al-'Ilm* in 1005. He was himself deeply interesting in astronomy and his government employed its own chief astronomer, Ibn Yunus, who composed the *Zij al-Hakim al-kabir*, in honor of its patron, the caliph al-Hakim.

On the other hand, some advances endeavoured by the rulers or shahs of Safavid dynasty were: expansion of region, improvement in administration area, and development in civilization. First year of his reign, Isma'il occupied the geographic center of the pre-Islamic Achaemenid and Sassanian Persian empires. He altered administrative system of the traditional bureaucratic system (sufi organization of the Safawiyyah) into the Safavid state in the sense of modern management.

The most popular and powerful shah of Safavid dynasty was Shah 'Abas I who displayed the strong sense of pragmatism which was of the dominant characteristics. As a leader of of Shi'ah and his position as propagator of the faith, 'Abbas founded a new mosque also contained two schools, at the Eastern and Western corners of the courtyard, with underground rooms so that teaching could be continued in the hot summer and cold winter months. Further projecting power and authority, a unique double –dome structure was

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school and a mosque. His physician, Tajik Hakim Daud, erected a large mosque which retained the standard four *ayvan* plan and a two-storey arcade.

C. Comparison of Factors Causing Their Decline and Fall

There are several factors causing Fatimid decline and fall. First of all was because of the religious doctrine of the dynasty which unacceptable by the majority of the citizens. The majority of them were the sunni, whereas the ruler was the shi'i, i.e. Isma'ili. The second factor was the weakness of the Fatimid rulers/caliphs. Some caliphs were inaugurated when they were still very young, so they became as puppets. The third factor was the split within the military. In the military, there were three elements of strength, namely: element of the Berber, element of the Turkish and element of the Sudanese which were always competitive and occasionally involved in the warfare among them. The other factor, there was a contest for power between caliphs and viziers. The last vizier of the Fatimid caliphs (Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi) abolished the Fatimid dynasty.

On the other hand, Safavid dynasty declined and because of several factors. First of all was the weakness of the rulers/shahs; as what happened in the Fatimid dynasty that some of them were inaugurated as a ruler when they were still young and they had no capacity to be rulers. The second factor was lack of concordat between the rulers and the religious leaders (ulama/mujtahid). The third factor was the difference of basic ideology between of the ruler and the majority of the people. The fourth factor was the split within the military; there was the antipathy between Turkish and Persian

officers in the military command structure. The fifth factor was the practice of converting "state" into "crown" provinces. The sixth factor was the irresponsible character of the “shadow government” represented by the *harem* and the eunuchs. The last factor was the degeneration of the dynasty whose scions were brought up in the atmosphere of the *harem*, in complete ignorance of the outside world.

From the above short comparisons, it can be seen that there are some similarities in factors that caused the decline and fall of two Shi'i dynasties: (1) different basic ideology of the rulers and the majority of the people; (2) the weakness of the rulers; (3) the existence of “shadow government” who was in reality became a real ruler; (4) the split or disharmony relationship within the military.

CONCLUSION

From the previous explanation, the writer expresses several points as conclusion. First, the division of Islamic community into Sunni and Shi'ah branches has commonly explained in terms of purely political differences. Shi'ah is a sect in Islam that believes that 'Ali bin Abu Talib is the legitimate successor to Muhammad and rejects the first three caliphs. The most popular opinion is that the Shi'ah was born after a failure in negotiations between the force of Caliph 'Ali bin Abu Talib with the force of Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan in Siffin in 657, which is commonly named as *tahkim* or arbitration. Those who remained loyal to the Caliph 'Ali were called *Syî'atu 'Ali* (followers of' Ali) or what is now called Shi'ah. The Shi'ah believes that descendants of Ali became known as imams and were seen not only as political leaders, but spiritual and religious leaders as well.

Within the Shi'ah, the various sects came into being because they differed over their imams' successions. The most important sects are: Zaidis (Zaidiyyah) or Fivers, Isma'ilis (Isma'iliyyah) or Seveners and Ithna 'Asharis (Ithna 'Ashariyyah) or Twelvers or Imamis (Imamiyyah). The important dynasty established by Zaidis is the Qasimi Imams in Yemen (1598-1851), the important dynasty established by Isma'ilis is Fatimid in North Africa (909-1171), and the important dynasty established by the Twelvers is Safavid in Persia (1501-1736).

The Fatimid Dynasty or *Daulah Fatimiyyah* was formed in 909 from territory the Abbasid Dynasty had receded from. The dynasty emerged as part of the Shi'ah renaissance, establishing itself in north Africa and then Egypt, one of the core regions of the muslim world. From there, they radiated their influence to neighbouring regions such as:

Syria, Iraq and the Hijaz. The founder of the Fatimid dynasty was 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi, who claimed as direct descent from Muhammad bin Isma'il and, ultimately, from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH through 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah. His history is known from the year 899, when he assumed leadership of the Isma'ili movement in Syria. He was then compelled to leave Syria, and he headed for North Africa, where an Isma'ili missionary, Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i had already successfully proselytized the Kutama Berbers of Ifriqiyyah (modern-day Tunisia). With the support of the Kutama, 'Ubaidillah al-Mahdi established the Fatimid state in North Africa in 909. Al-Mahdi settled into the palace formerly occupied by Abu 'Abdillah ash-Shi'i.

As for the origin of Safavid dynasty, it is different from that of the Fatimid dynasty. The Safavid dynasty had its origins in a long established sufi order which had flourished in Azerbaijan since the early 14th century. Its founder was Shaikh Safi ad-Din (1252-1334) who came from Ardebil. It seems to have been Junaid who began to transform the Safavid orders into a militant religio-political movement. It was Junaid who married Uzun Hasan Aq Quyunlu's sister and it was he who conducted missionary activities among Oghuz tribes in Azerbaijan and fough *ghazaz* against Christians in the Caucasus. Junaid's religious belief are not well known, but his son Haidar, who continued his father's military activities, was evidently a Shi'ah to some degree, even though he was raised in the Sunni Aq Quyunlu court and was married to one of Uzun Hasan's daughters. Isma'il who would be the founder of Safavid dynasty was born from this spouse. In December 1500, Isma'il crossed the river Kur and brought Farrukhsyar to battle near Fort Gulistan, Farrukhsyar was defeated and killed. Isma'il proceeded to the coast and captured Baku, but marched back toward Nakhchivan on hearing the

news that Alvand had crossed the Aras and was marching to meet him. The two armies met at Sharur. Isma'il entered Tabriz, and he was the first ruler or shah of Safavid dynasty after defeating Aq Quyunlu in 1501.

The Fatimid dynasty which held the power in North Africa from 909-1171 (around 262 years) had 14 rulers or caliphs, namely: Al-Mahdi (909-934), al-Qa'im (934-946), al-Mansur (946-953), al-Mu'izz (953-975), al-'Aziz (975-996), al-Hakim (996-1020), az-Zahir (1020-1035), al-Mustansir (1035-1094), al-Musta'li (1094-1101), al-Amir (1101-1130), al-Hafiz (1130-1149), az-Zafir (1149-1154), al-Fa'iz (1154-1160) and al-'Adid (1160-1171). The caliphs who had great contribution for developing the dynasty are: 'Ubadillah al-Mahdi, al-'Aziz, al-Hakim and al-Mu'izz. The endeavours carried out by the caliphs, among others are: a) strengthening the doctrine of Isma'iliyyah; b) forming councils/agencies were required, c) expansion of the region, d) building up the system of defense, military and naval power, e) reformation of fiscal; f) centralization of tax collection, g) development of populist economic; h) extending trade lanes, i) building cities with their infrastructures (like: Cairo, Fustat), j) establishing mosques (like al-Azhar) and educational institutions, including libraries and observatories, k) facilitating scientists and writers to work properly.

On the other hand, the Safavid dynasty which held the power in Persia from 1501-1736 (around 235 years) had 11 rulers or shahs, namely: Isma'il I (1501-1524), Tahmasp I (1524-1576), Isma'il II (1576-1578), Muhammad Khudabanda (1578-1588), 'Abbas I (1588-1629), Safi I (1629-1642), 'Abbas II (1642-1666), Safi II or Sulaiman (1666-1694), Husain (1694-1722), Tahmasp II (1722-1732), 'Abbas III (1732-1736). The caliphs who had great contribution for developing the dynasty are: Isma'il I,'Abbas I & 'Abbas II. The endeavours carried out

by the caliphs, among others are: a) determining the doctrine of the Ithna 'Ashariyyah as the official religion; b) inviting religious leaders (*ulama'*) of Shi'ah to Persia, c) territorial expansion, d) improving the administrative system, e) unifying existing powers/institutions; f) reformation of security, law and financial systems; g) reorganization of military force; g) signing agreements with the Ottoman Dynasty, h) establishing Isfahan as the capital and center of the military, political, economic, trade and spiritual authorities; i) enhancing the realization of fairness and tolerance of other faiths, j) to building castles and infrastructure (like: Khadju bridge and Zayanda-rud dam), k) developing arts and building public facilities, e) increasing religious activities and building mosques and education institutions.

Concering factors that caused the decline and fall of Fatijmid dynasty were: a) the religious doctrine of the dynasty which unacceptable by the majority of the citizens; b) the weakness of the Fatimid rulers/caliphs; c) the split within the military; d) the contest for power between caliphs and viziers. Otherwise; factors that caused the decline and fall of Fatijmid dynasty were: a) the weakness of the rulers/shahs; b) the lack of concordat between the rulers and the religious leaders (ulama/mujtahid); c) The difference of basic ideology between the ruler and the majority of the people; d) The antipathy between Turkish and Persian officers in the military command structure; e) The practice of converting "state" into "crown" provinces; f) The irresponsible character of the “shadow government” represented by the *harem* and the eunuchs; g) The degeneration of the dynasty whose scions were brought up in the atmosphere of the *harem*, in complete ignorance of the outside world.

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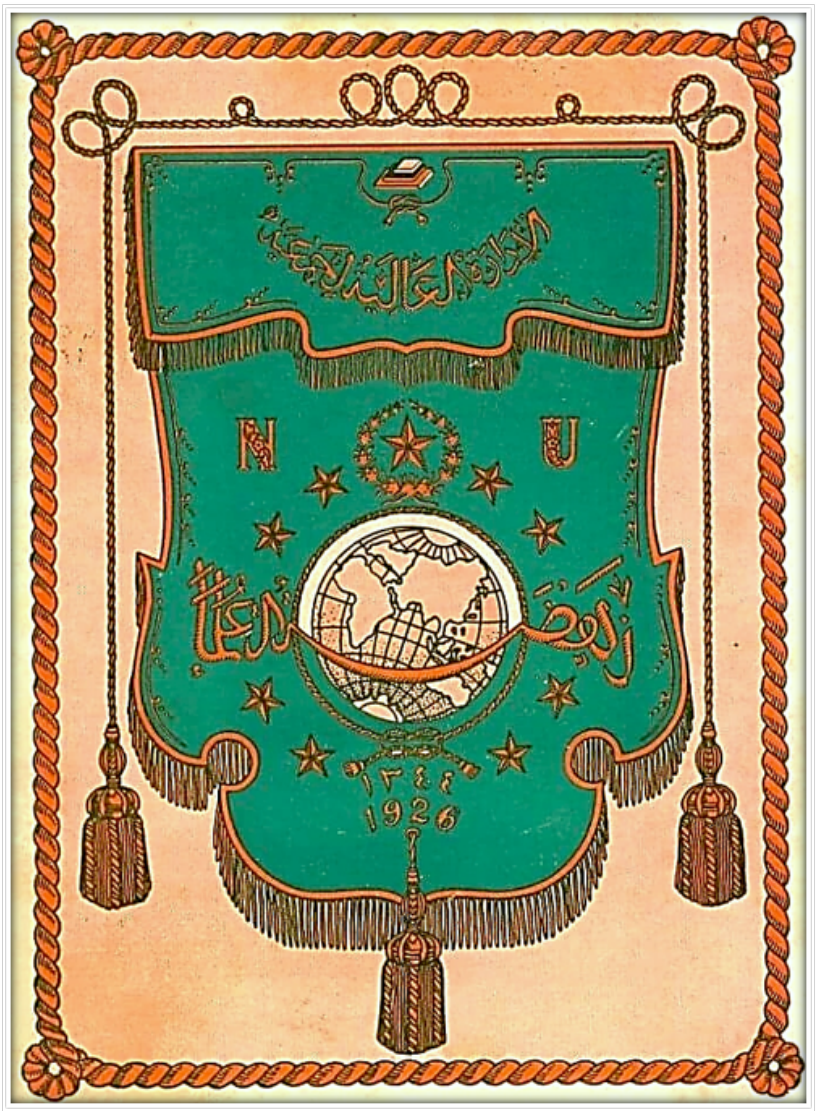
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